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THE METHODIST;

OR,

INCIDENTS AND CHARACTERS FROM LIFE

IN THE

BALTIMORE CONFERENCE.

BY MIRIAM FLETCHER.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY W. P. STRICKLAND, D.D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

HAVING, for many years, been conversant with the deeply interesting scenes and characters of Methodist life, the question has often arisen in my mind, "Why, when here is so rich and varied a field for writers of fiction, has no one improved it?" Often have I listened with breathless interest to tales from the lips of our fathers, of their early toils and sufferings, when circuits were almost as large as conferences now are, and when even the humblest shelter might not be attained before the traveller was overtaken by the shades of night, and, like the revered McKendree, he has rested his weary head upon the ground, and found, on waking, his hair frozen to his rough pillow; when, like another who still lives to proclaim his message of peace, these self-denying men were so long absent from the comforts of home as to find, on their return they were unknown to their children. Why, I have again and again asked, why cannot these soul-stirring incidents find a more enduring record, before their memory is entombed with the venerable actors?

It cannot be denied that the peculiar and graphic

features of Methodism are rapidly fading, and will soon disappear from among us. They may still linger, perhaps, on the remote frontier of our country; but we who sit at home, surrounded by the enfeebling influences of refined and wealthy Methodism, need to be reminded of the early struggles and privations of our missionary fathers.

Who will rescue these thrilling stories from oblivion? Who will explore this yet almost unopened mine of treasure? Of my own incompetency I am not ignorant, and yet, in despair of seeing the pleasing task undertaken by more skillful hands, I venture,—not to follow the hardy pioneer in his wanderings by wood and stream,—not to describe the difficulties and dangers of the generation which has passed away,—but to weave into a simple narrative some of those circumstances that have occurred within my own knowledge.

If, among the few who may read these unpretending pages, some should notice an occasional anachronism, let it pass—the story is a fiction. Again, if others should think the incidents extravagant and overwrought, in all probability they are the very ones that were drawn from actual life—from personal observation. Hoping this humble attempt may stimulate others of more ability to tread in the path here merely indicated, this True Fiction is commended to the indulgence of the reader, by

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

This work, though belonging to that class of books denominated imaginative literature, bears internal evidence of its truthfulness. Its style of narrative possesses an irresistible interest. Even the details necessary to fill up the picture are so readable, that it would be sensibly wanting in beauty and tone without them. We have perused these pages with an absorbing interest, and frankly confess that no work of fiction we ever read possesses half the charm which this does; and what is vastly better, it cannot fail to awaken the purest emotions and improve the heart. The characters are all so admirably drawn, the scenes so graphically described, and the grouping so well executed, that the persons and scenes rise before the mind in life-like reality. Nothing is overwrought, a graceful and beautiful simplicity pervading and blending the whole. The following remarks, from Talfourd, on works of an imaginative cast, may most appropriately be applied to "The

Methodist," with this difference, that its scenes and incidents are sustained by veritable history:

"The world is not in danger of becoming too romantic. The golden threads of poesy are not too thickly or too closely interwoven with the web of existence. Sympathy is the first great lesson which man should learn. It will be ill for him if he proceed no further, if his emotions are but excited to roll back on his heart and to be fostered in luxurious quiet. But unless he learns to feel for things in which he has no personal interest, he can achieve nothing generous or noble. The soul will not be the worse for thinking too well of its kind, or believing that the highest excellence is within the reach of its exertions."

If this be true in regard to works of mere fiction, where the real is not, and types of excellence are created for the purpose of directing mankind to loftier standards, and exciting them to the attainment of higher excellencies, why should imagination be shut out of the realm of fact itself?

The scenes of the author lie mostly in Virginia, with an occasional change to Baltimore, that ancient home of Methodism. The pioneer Methodist preachers in an early period found their way into the "Old Dominion," and though they were looked upon by the ministers of the Episcopal Church as out of the Divine order, yet, by their faithful preaching and self-sacrificing devotion, they won their way into the hearts and homes of some of the noblest families

of the Cavalier State. When that tireless itinerant, Asbury, was treated as an interloper by a parish minister, who stoutly insisted that he had no authority to preach, much less to invade the precincts of his parish, the cure and care of whose souls belonged to him exclusively, the Methodist bishop calmly responded: "I have authority from God, and I am commissioned by him to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

To the honor of the Episcopal Church, however, be it written, that the Methodist itinerants were not thus regarded by all the ministers and members of that denomination. History furnishes honorable exceptions. There were some of the Church of which Wesley was a Presbyter, and in the pale of which he lived and died, with a loyalty which outlasted persecution itself, who—like Fletcher of Madeley, and Perronet of Shoreham, and Grimshaw of Haworth (a parish now in possession of the father of Charlotte Brontë, and whose husband is the curate), and also "honorable women, not a few," such as Lady Huntingdon, Lady Glenorchy, and Lady Maxwell—found in Methodism an elevated type of piety which enlisted their sympathies, and secured their approbation and support. The "faithful and beloved" Jarratt, of Virginia, whom Asbury describes as "a man of great genius and piety, a successful

preacher, and the first who received the despised Methodist preachers, when strangers and unfriended he took them to his house, and had societies formed in his parish;" and many others, both in the ministry and laity, opened their doors and gave a hearty welcome to the itinerants, who in the name of their Divine Master, and with the heaven-accredited seals to their ministry, preached the Gospel in the rude cabins and proclaimed a full and free salvation in the wilderness.

For Washington, that true Virginia gentleman, the early Methodist preachers entertained the highest regard; and the action of one of their earliest Conferences, held in the city of New York, by which he was addressed and recognized as President of the United States, and in which they pledged the truest loyalty to him and his government, shows that so far from being enemies to the country or true religion, they were the first, as a Church, to recognize the constituted authorities of the United and Independent States, and were the first to be recognized in turn.

Much of the toils, hardships, and successes of these pioneer preachers is unwritten, and what has been made a matter of historic record only exists in fragmentary sketches. This book embraces a part of that history, and like Scott's "Old Mortality," which so thrillingly describes the labors, sufferings and con

flicts of the Scotch Covenanters, it will be read with interest by all who love to dwell upon the heroic achievements of the pioneers of the cross. The author's description of a Methodist "Class-meeting," and also of a "Watch-night meeting" and "Camp-meeting," is truly to the life, and could not have been written but by one extensively acquainted with the peculiar forms of Methodism. The toils incident to an itinerant life, and the greetings and farewells of the noble band, as they met in Conference and then went out reinspired to their different and distant fields of labor, never all to meet again, are touchingly described.

We hesitate not to say, that no Christian, of whatever denomination, can rise from the perusal of this book without realizing a quickening of spiritual emotion, and no Methodist can read it without feeling a reawakening of the zeal and devotion that characterized the early ministers and members of the Church.

W. P. Strickland.

New York, *Feb.* 7, 1859.

THE METHODIST.

CHAPTER I.

TIDINGS FROM THE EXILES.

"In travelling along at night, as Hazlitt says, we catch a glimpse into cheerful looking rooms, with light blazing in them, and we conclude, involuntarily, how happy the inmates must be. Yet there is heaven and hell in those rooms, and the same heaven and hell that we have known in others."

"WHAT can be more pleasant and cheering than the first fire of autumn?" said Virginia Hunter to her father, as they entered together the cosy little library. "How do you like my plan of having tea served here? The dining-room is so large and cheerless when there are so few of us."

"The change is a decided improvement, my daughter. The evening is cool for the season," replied her father, as he rolled up a large chair to the fire. Then turning to the open door of the usual eating-room, he called in a loud voice, "Who is there?"

He was promptly answered by the appearance of two bright negro boys, with white aprons and whiter teeth, which last were made to play a conspicuous part, as they nearly upset each other in their eagerness to answer the summons.

"Has Primus returned from town?"

"Don't know, sir," issued simultaneously from both sets of glittering teeth.

"Well, where's Israel? can you tell that?"

This time the machinery did not act so entirely in concert, for No. 1, Joe, suddenly disappeared, while No. 2, Pete, replied that Israel had gone to bring in supper. No. 1 soon reappeared triumphantly bearing a plate of toast, in the train of Israel, while the teeth and eyes inaudibly expressed—"Here he is, sir."

"Israel, has Primus returned yet?"

"I think not, sir."

Col. Hunter rose and walked to the window, saying that it was time for him to come, while Israel, in a quiet tone, remarked that he believed he had heard him say he was going to Greenville for the saddle.

"Oh yes, I remember I directed him last night to go for it as soon as it was done."

He sat down, took a book and seemed to read; the boys, in the meantime, made themselves very busy about the table till sent to call their Master Willie, to supper.

The meal passed off rather heavily. Col. Hunter was resolutely silent, though kind as usual. Willie, a fair pale boy, with features of statue-like beauty, made several attempts to engage his father and sister in conversation, but finding them both absorbed with other subjects of thought, soon motioned his two sable playmates to follow with a light, and went to his own room. Virginia sat anxiously watching her father's face awhile; but not reading anything distinctly there, she drew her chair close to him, and asked if he was expecting any letters from the office, that troubled him.

"No, my dear," he replied, pushing the book from him, "none that trouble me, but one that interests me

deeply." He paused, and looking steadily into the fire, cleared his voice and continued, "I wrote to your sister last month, and I am expecting an answer. Perhaps it will come to-night."

"Dear father, I hope there is nothing the matter; but you seem so restless and absorbed."

"Nothing, I trust, my child; I have invited Sophy to come and bring the children here, that we may all make one family again."

Virginia threw her arms round his neck and kissed him.

"Then you are pleased with the arrangement, Jinnie?"

"Oh yes, to be sure, I am delighted. How brightly the winter will come and go with dear Sophy and Harry and Emma here! Do you think we shall get an answer to-night?"

"I hope so, for the truth is, I have received, since I wrote, a letter from Mrs. Benton. Little Emma"——

"What, dear father?"

"Oh, Jinnie, we have lost her—and her mother was unable to write."

Virginia's tender heart melted, though the deeply feeling father proudly refused to yield.

"Why did you not tell me before?" asked Virginia, as soon as she could find voice.

"Because I hoped to lessen your sorrow by the intelligence that your sister and Harry would soon be with us. Now cheer up, my child, we shall soon know whether there is a letter, for I think I heard the gate just now. Yes, there are the pony's footsteps on the gravel."

Virginia sprang to the window, and then to the door, just in time to meet Primus as he came in with the mail.

bag. Col. Hunter took it from him, and soon found the letter he sought. Father and daughter read together.

"My dear Father:

"Your very welcome letter reached me more than a week ago, but I was at the time entirely unable to write, or even to think. My friend Mrs. Benton was kind enough to acknowledge it for me, and also to inform you of my overwhelming affliction in the loss of my little Emma. Thus one more tie is sundered. Now I have only my precious Harry, and in view of his future interests for time and eternity, I must decide upon the question of your kind invitation. I have been endeavoring to look at the subject in every point of view. Our property is here, but a friend, in whom I have perfect confidence, will attend to it for me till it can be disposed of. My hope of having my daughter educated by my friend Mrs. Watson would have presented a great inducement to remain here, but that is now at an end—she no longer needs my care. I thank you for your kind proposal that Harry should share with Willie the instruction of Mr. Lambert. The plan certainly appears more advantageous for him than any that I now think of in the West, besides giving us the comfort of being all together again. It will be painful to part with dear friends here, who have stood by me in many a trying hour—and that sweet spot now visible from my window, where my lost ones are sleeping. But these are unprofitable indulgences. My dear father, we will come to you. It is almost three years since we have met, and you will find us both changed outwardly, but in heart the same affectionate children, who long to see you all. It will require but little time to make my

arrangements for leaving this place. As some of my friends are going to spend the winter in Washington, we can have their company as far as the Court House, and when there I shall feel almost at home. We will, unless providentially hindered, be at Woodbury next Wednesday. With love to dear Virginia and Willie, farewell till then."

"Your affectionate daughter,

"Sophy C. Bradford."

A very long and interesting conversation followed the reading of this brief epistle, in which the father's heart seemed to open more to the eye of the child than ever before. He spoke of his son, of his bitter disappointment that his health still continued so feeble as to render it impossible for him to become a scholar or even an active farmer. He then spoke of Harry, but with more reserve, as if unwilling, for a moment, to entertain the idea that he must inherit the family estate, in case poor Willie should not reach maturity. He could not bear the thought that Hunter's Lodge, for so many generations the property and home of a David Hunter, should belong to any other name.

Virginia had long watched the shadows deepening over her father's spirit. He had entirely lost that frank, joyous manner that once made him the life and favorite of society. If for a moment the cloud seemed to break away, the approach of his gentle son or the slightest allusion to him would bring it back. He had recently spoken more frequently and with more tenderness of his absent daughter.

At length, after a long pause, Col. Hunter rose and taking his chamber light, kissed his daughter, saying that as he should have much to think of in the morning, he wished she would see that Jack prepared the carriage for Wednesday to meet the stage at Woodbury.

CHAPTER II.

GLIMMERINGS IN THE CABIN.

"And you, my humble friends,
In joy and sorrow, poverty and wealth,
We've proved you always true. You've borne your part
With us in bridal, baptism, burial—all
That's cast its light or shade across our path
Has touched your hearts with kindliest sympathy.
Who call you ours—our bond-slaves—read but half;
We too are yours, by right of love and pride."

VIRGINIA'S eyes were open earlier than usual in the morning, and she was soon in the portico admiring the many colored woods, and rejoicing that her sister would return to the home of her childhood at such a lovely season; then turning down a side flight of steps, she took her way through a fine grove of oaks, towards a line of cabins that stood on the bank of a narrow stream. She stopped at the first door, which stood open, inviting the warm rays of an October sun to enter. Not less welcome was the young visitor who presented her sparkling face in their company.

"Lor, Miss Jinnie, is you come to see your ole mammy so early dis morning? Why, chile, I s'posed you all wasn't hardly up yet."

"Oh yes, mammy dear, it was as much as I could do to stay in bed till daylight; for we have heard from sister Sophy, and she is coming home—to stay; only think of that."

"Bless de Lord! You don't say so, honey!"

"But oh, mammy, dear little Emma is dead, the little darling, my own sweet pet." And poor Virginia dropped her face in her hands and wept.

The old nurse tried to comfort her, while she wept with her. Soon, however, the thought of seeing her sister and Harry gained the victory, and looking up, smiling through her tears, she said:

"Oh, mammy, won't it be nice to have Sophy here all the time? She will keep house, and then poor father can have everything to suit him. I never can get his coffee just right, his eggs are always either boiled too much, or too little, and so I have to scold poor Charity; though I know she tries her best. Never mind, everything will be done to admiration when Sophy comes. She, somehow or other, has a way of making everybody do right—I suppose because she always does right herself." And laughing, she added, "now, mammy, can't you see those grave eyes fixed upon me, saying, 'no, dear Jinnie, you must not say that, because it is not *true*. Even your love for me must not lead you to say anything that is not *true*.' Oh, I am so glad she is coming. I know I shall behave a great deal better when she is here. Poor father! I cannot help being impatient sometimes. And then Willie will read so much. Dr. Torrence says he ought not, but I cannot always think of amusements for him. Harry will be a perfect treasure. Oh, if we could only have sweet little Emma too!"

"Ah, yes, honey, but we can't 'spect to have all we want in dis worl. De dear chile gone where she be better off, where she die no more."

Virginia's eyes were again filling with tears, but sud-

denly remembering the business that brought her to the cabin, she exclaimed:

"Oh dear! I had nearly forgotten the most important part of my business. Father begged me last night to see that Daddy Jack had carriage and harness all in order to go to Woodbury to-morrow, for he said he knew Sophy would like best to have him drive her; it would seem so much more like old times; and then Tom, you know, is sowing wheat. Now I must run back, for I have enough to look after. Come up to the house by and by.

The old woman followed the flying footsteps of her beloved nursling with a thoughtful gaze, for a moment; then slowly turning from the door, she said to herself in a low tone, "Ah, yes honey, ole Letty glad as you be—mebbe gladder—her ole eyes see more'n you do 'bout dese changes. De Lord grant my poor prayers, den Miss Sophy's coming be a blessing indeed."

So saying, she took a horn from its place by the chimney, and going to the window in the back of the room, she blew a few notes and returned it to its nail. This done she stepped about with quick motions, though without seeming to have any definite object, except to put things in new places, and then to put them back again. She still talked to herself, in an excited manner, about the different members of that family, which had for so many years been her world. Scenes of past joy and sorrow came thronging up before her with such absorbing power, that she almost started when a tall square built negro man stepped into the door with the exclamation:

"Well, ole 'oman, what you will wid me now? I jist got to working, and you call me home agin. When you

'spose Mars Davy give me 'nother day to fix up de ole truck patch!"

"Stop, stop now, Jack, you haint heerd de news."

"What news, Letty? news a rare ting dese days, and seems to me you look monsous stately 'bout it, anyhow."

"Wonder how you look when I tell you dat Miss Sophy to be home to-morrow night, to live all de rest of her days! And you're to drive de carriage to Woodbury; so you better be looking after de harness, ole man; Mars Davy make us all jump if 'taint all right."

The old man seemed for a moment struck dumb, but soon finding the power of speech, he said with great solemnity, "Well, now dat is news, I hope dis ole heart thankful. I know he glad." And he raised his eyes devoutly, at the same time uncovering his grey head.

He soon left the house to inspect the condition of the carriage and harness, while Letty, from the force of habit, returned to her spinning; uttering, from time to time, short expressions denoting that the past was again before her, with almost the freshness of her youth, when she came to Hunter's Lodge, with the mother of the now expected guest, then a young fair bride, considering herself no unimportant character in the festivities. Solemn funeral rites had again and again followed those festivities. Births, marriages, estrangements, all passed rapidly through her mind, till in her bewilderment, she was glad to see her husband returning.

"Come wife," said he, "find me my needles and twine. Dis harness must not give way when ole Jack drives."

As they sat, the one twirling the flax wheel, and spinning uneven threads, the other, stitching, blacking and

burnishing, there was a pause. After a long breath, Jack again broke forth—

"Ole 'oman!"—Then checking himself, he seemed at a loss what to say next.

Letty's wheel stopped, and she sat silently looking at him. Another long breath and then—"What you s'pose turned Mars Davey round so sudden? He most gen'ral stick to he word, and I hear him say more'n once Miss Sophy never live home agin. If she would go marry a methodis', she must live her own way."

"Yes, I know all dat, Jack, honey; but deed I no tink it so sudden after all. I tink sometimes Mars' heart getting a leetle tender. He write to Miss Sophy oftener now a days, as I hear tell, and often send her presents, and de children too; and den, you know, when dey all here, he seemed sometimes to like Mars Henry right well; only dey wouldn't drink wine, and dance and cut up as he wanted em to, so dat sort o' vexed him agin. But I tell you what, Jack, man, when poor Mars Willie got throwed, and didn't get no better—least-ways not so mighty much—you know that de greatest trouble of all; and I tell you now, ole man, de good book say, trouble no come out of de ground. Who knows but all dis sent on purpose to touch poor Mars Davy's heart, and make him better man? Not dat I would be de one to say, he not kind master to his people—'cept when he get angry sure. But you know, honey," and she dropped the low tone of her voice to a whisper, "Mars Davy do seem to live for dis worl and nottin else. He never seem to tink, dere is great master up 'bove to ask him in de great day of 'count, What you do so for?"

Jack groaned and shook his head. "Letty, what you tink 'bout Mars Willie?"

"What I tink? Well I tell you. I tink he just one of de best conditioned children I ever see. He so pleasant, so kind, to de people. You know when Joe was sick, how he went to see him every far day, and carried him all sorts of goodies, and talked to him, so cheery like 'bout getting well. He's just as soft and tender as a little girl."

"Ah dats it, de very ting. Mars Davy wants him to be like he use to was, strong and hearty. He can't bear it no how, 'cause he's so puny like. And den though dey don't say much about it, now a days, I know when anyting comes across him sort o' sudden, he faints right away, just as he did at first, only he comes to quicker mebbe. Ye see if he should be taken away, mars knows there is nobody to take de place but Mars Harry, and he's just sure to be a methodis' like his father—so p'raps —but we shall see, we shall see, ole 'oman."

CHAPTER III.

RETURN OF THE WIDOW AND THE FATHERLESS.

"Home, take the wanderer back.
She left your halls a loved and loving bride,
Sowing bright seeds of future joy and hope.
Alas! a blighted harvest!—one alone
Will ripen here, the rest bear fruit in Heaven."

As Virginia returned from the cabin of her nurse, she saw the slender form of her little brother, stooping among the rocks. He joined her, and smilingly held up some moss, saying, "See, Virginia, how beautiful!"

"What is it, dear, that seems to please you so much?"

"It is this moss. Though all the leaves are falling, see how fresh it is. Spring says, 'the moss looks bright where my foot has been;' and I think Autumn might say the same. Don't you Jinnie?"

"Yes, dearest," she replied; "but come with me now, I have something to say to you."

They reached the house, and coming into the portico, Virginia drew her brother gently to her side, saying,

"Sit down by me, dear, and I will tell you. Last night father received a letter from Sophy, and she is coming home."

"Is she? I am so glad! And will Harry and Emma come too?"

Virginia hesitated, but replied, "Yes, Harry will come."

"Oh, then I know she will not leave Emma behind, for she never writes a letter to us without telling us all about her, and saying she wishes we could see her."

Virginia still hesitated, dreading to shock the morbidly sensitive boy, but his inquiring eye was upon her, and she said gently, "Willie, you would not be very sorry, would you, if you knew little darling Emmy was gone to that beautiful world where our dear mother is?"

The child raised his large dark eyes to her face, and whispered, "Emma is dead." The lips quivered, and for a moment his sister feared he would faint, as he so often did, when suddenly agitated. But the extreme paleness passed away, and clasping his hands with fervor, and looking upward, he repeated part of a poem which he had been reading a few days before:

> "Sure to the mansion of the blest,
> When infant innocence ascends,
> Some angel brighter than the rest
> The spotless spirit's flight attends."

Virginia listened, almost with awe, to the precocious enthusiasm of the child; but she could not comprehend it. She felt afraid of, she knew not what, and tried to turn his thought into another channel. She spoke of Harry and their future sports. Willie seemed to listen, but he said nothing in reply and soon slipped away.

Virginia sat still where he left her, in deep thought, till, seeing her father ride up to the stile, she tried to rouse herself to meet him cheerfully, as he came up the steps looking tired, and took a chair near her.

"Good morning, dear father. How much warmer it

is this morning than yesterday. Can Indian summer have commenced already?"

"Perhaps so, my daughter. The atmosphere looks like it. Has Jack been told to have the carriage ready?"

"Yes, sir, I saw Letty myself, as soon as I was dressed."

"That is well. Virginia, would you like to go to Woodbury to meet your sister?"

"Oh yes, I should very much; but would she be as well pleased as if you should go?"

"I expect to go, but I thought they might feel lonely in the carriage; so you had better be ready after an early dinner."

Once more Virginia surveyed her sister's room, to be sure that every comfort was prepared. Again she pointed out to her nurse, as if it was new to her, the pleasant view from the windows, remarking that Sophy loved to see the first light of the morning on the mountains.

"And this room for Harry," she continued, "opening out of hers. I know that will please her. But, mammy, you do not seem to be as happy as I am. What is the matter?"

"Oh, nothing, honey, only old people can look back and see so many changes."

"Oh, but this is a delightful change, you know, and I do not mean to think of anything gloomy now. Goodbye. There is Jack looking as proud and pleased as if he was driving the President's carriage." And with a bounding step she was soon in her place.

The ride was long enough for even her girlish spirits to subside. The thought of the little cherub Emma, left

behind, cold and silent in her grassy bed, saddened her, while the feeling, more than the actual knowledge of widely different views of life, entertained by her father and sister, with vague recollections of coolness towards her brother-in-law, came up to her remembrance; but she tried to banish all such thoughts, and felt glad to find her father was at the village before her. He handed her into the house, where she was deferentially greeted by the landlord and his courteous wife, invited into the "*charmber*" and accommodated with a window from which she could see the stage road for several miles.

"How long before we may expect the stage, Mrs. Tyler," she inquired.

"Well I reckon, Miss Hunter, that it will not be more than half an hour. But they are rather uncertain. Are you expecting friends?"

"Yes, ma'am, my sister, Mrs. Bradford."

"Indeed! it is a long time since she has been at home, I believe."

"Yes, ma'am."

"I think she is a widow now, Miss Hunter."

Again Virginia gave an affirmative answer, and fearing lest the next question should be about the children, she hastily rose, and said that as the weather was so pleasant, she would walk out. She wandered about the woods, and along the road, but less observant of their gorgeous hues than of her watch, till long after the appointed time had expired; and she turned to retrace her steps, when she met her father, in the carriage, proceeding up the road. He told her, that as the stage seemed to be behind time, he would drive on and meet it.

The loquacious Mrs. Tyler had found some occupation about her household, so Virginia was happily left to her

own thoughts, varied by glancing over some old books, and watching the gorge of the mountain, where the stage might first be seen for a moment. That sight she missed, and the first intimation of its approach was the exhilarating notes of the horn echoing among the nearer hills; and the carriage in advance, was soon seen emerging from the woods. Now they were at the door, and she was clasped in her sister's arms, and warmly greeted by Harry. By this time the lumbering vehicle arrived with the luggage.

The eyes of both father and daughter betrayed the depth of emotion with which they had again met, and with all his effort to appear cheerful, there was a tenderness in Col. Hunter's attentions to the comfort of his drooping child, that plainly showed there was no coldness in his feelings now. As for Jack, it was well he was called upon to assist with the trunks, or he would have sat down by the road-side to cry it out, in peace and quietness. Fortunately it was so late, that all was hurry to get home before night.

Mrs. Bradford was completely exhausted, and Virginia wept in silence with her, while Harry watched both with anxious sympathy. A few questions were asked about Willie and the servants, but all other conversation seemed, by tacit consent, to be deferred to a future time.

The soft shades of evening were descending like a veil over the beauties of Hunter's Lodge as they passed up the avenue, but every tree and flower seemed to utter a soothing welcome to the returned wanderer, as she recognized them, one after another, in passing, and by the time she entered the stately mansion of her ancestors, she was calm, with a thankful sense of the love of that Being, who had opened the heart of her father to re-

ceive her again. The sight of poor little Willie, so changed, so blighted, was almost too much for her so recently acquired fortitude, but as she held him to her bosom, she felt not the pang of disappointed worldly expectations that wrung his father's heart, for hers went up in prayer, that as he faded in this world, he might only be brightening for a more enduring inheritance. This thought again composed her, and enabled her to return with smiles the warm greetings of the household servants, who crowded to meet her in the hall. Then Col. Hunter interposed, saying, "Virginia, you had better show your sister to her room, and I will order supper."

One more trying scene awaited poor Mrs. Bradford, for on reaching her room, there was old Letty, her faithful nurse, ready to greet her with a burst of tears and blessings. But she soon discovered that her beloved Miss Sophy was too weak to bear so much agitation, and bidding her an affectionate "good night," she returned to her little cabin, there to discuss the matter at length with Jack, and many others of her fellow servants, who assembled to learn the news.

Solitude was the best medicine for the over-excited feelings of Mrs. Bradford, and after one long gaze upon her mother's portrait, she sunk upon her knees in thankfulness. Although she found no words, her "soul's sincere desire" went up, that she might be the favored instrument in awakening her dear father to a sense of the insufficiency of all earthly expectations, and leading him, with her young sister and brother, to that Saviour, of whom they were at present so ignorant. She rose from her knees strengthened and tranquillized, and when Virginia came up to call her to supper, she was able

in some degree to respond to her cheerful conversation.

Virginia took her seat at the head of the table, remarking, "You are tired to-night, dear Sophy, but to-morrow you are to be regularly installed as lady of the mansion, and I am to be your humble attendant, deputy or factotum, as you may direct. My own darling Willie, here, will quote poetry to suit any occasion for your amusement or edification. And here is Israel, a most grave and dignified waiter, to stand behind your chair, and anticipate your slightest wish; also Joe and Pete, neither grave nor dignified, but almost as ready to fly on your errands as they are to start off on some frolic of their own."

"And what is to be my office?" said Harry, laughing; "you seem to have forgotten me."

"Not at all, I assure you; your office is to be no sinecure. You are to be my esquire, to hold my stirrup and protect me in all my excursions about the country."

Mrs. Bradford responded to this gay sally with a gentle smile; but otherwise, Harry and his young aunt sustained the "table talk" between them till, at an early hour, the travellers retired to rest.

CHAPTER IV.

A HOUSE BUILT UPON THE SAND.

"And thus it is in life, and in the breast,
Gay sparkling hopes arise,
Each one in turn just shows its gleaming crest,
Then falls away and dies.
Yet still the broken waves retiring strive
Again their crests to rear,
Seeking in sparkling beauty to revive
As in their first career.
They strive in vain."

Col. David Hunter, of Hunter's Lodge, was the last of several generations bearing that name, all born and dying in that same family mansion. He was early left the undisputed master of himself and a large estate, in one of the most beautiful counties of Virginia. Every incident and association of his childhood and youth had tended to increase the sense of his importance as the heir of that name and patrimony, together with an ardent desire to hand down the same in an unbroken line to future generations.

Commanding in person, and captivating in manners, with education enough to shine in society, he found no difficulty in gaining the affections of the gentle Sophy Cary—whose residence was in an adjoining county. He found her visiting at the house of his most intimate friend and neighbor, Mr. Carter, with whom she was connected by marriage. As often occurs, they were in character very unlike; but it so happened there were

visiting at the same house, several gay, fashionable young ladies, who did not disguise their admiration of the handsome possessor of Hunter's Lodge. Their great desire to appear charming in his eyes, sometimes led them beyond the bounds of strict feminine propriety, while, to their utter surprise, the modest and retiring graces of Miss Cary, losing nothing by the contrast, won the prize.

After Miss Cary's marriage, the cares of a mother, so much more in accordance with her tender nature than dinner parties, dancing parties, and gay excursions about the country, soon seemed in some degree to separate her from her husband; for a daily visit to the nursery, and a game of romps among the children, with the assurance that *David* and the others were well, entirely satisfied his paternal solicitude, and he often wondered that their mother should prefer their company to the continual round of pleasures that, to him, made the substance of life.

But different as were their tastes and pursuits, they were to suffer together. In one week two lovely boys were snatched from them, at once bearing away the family name and cherished hopes of the father to the grave. The mother found a balm for these repeated wounds, in a clearer realization of the shadowy nature of earthly possessions, and a brighter view of that love which had removed her darlings to "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." But none of her affectionate efforts to apply the same consolation to her husband availed. He loved his little daughter, and her innocent caresses soothed him at times; but the idea of leaving the family honors in the hands of a female, was more than his rebellious heart could bear.

The steady flight of time only seemed to ripen the meek submissive mother for that unseen world to which she was hastening; but the father, after a brief period of vacillation between the stupor of despair and the natural volatility of his temperament, again plunged into the excitements of field sports and gay companionship. Another message, proclaiming in his ear, "awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead," came in the decline and death of his really loved wife, but with no more success. He still clung to the fragments of those idols, that only pierced him to the heart. In the first despondency of his bereavement, he consented that his little orphan Sophy should find a home in Baltimore, with his only sister, Mrs. Rodney.

Mrs. Rodney inherited quite as much family pride as her brother, and the more readily undertook the charge of her niece, because she feared the influences to which she might be subjected at home. During the last months of Mrs. Hunter's life, the parish church had been without a rector, and in consequence the invalid had gratefully received the visits of the methodist minister and his wife, deriving much instruction and consolation from them. Mrs. Rodney came to Hunter's Lodge a few days before the death of her amiable sister, and instantly took the alarm at seeing the influence exerted over both mother and daughter. As soon as the solemn scenes of the funeral were over, she hastened to remove her niece to her own home in Baltimore, that she might have her educated to know and feel her importance, as the daughter and heiress of Col. David Hunter, of Hunter's Lodge.

For a long time she ascribed the failure of her efforts to the grief that almost crushed the heart of the gentle

child at the loss of her idolized mother. But when time had in some degree restored Sophy's natural spirits, though she always manifested the most grateful affection for the kindness of her aunt, no pride of birth, wealth or position, could erase the remembrance of her mother's dying conversations, or the meek sweetness of her character, and in the midst of all that this world could offer to insnare her youthful affections, she grew up a lovely example of Christian humility.

Col. Hunter, though at first nearly forced into society by his kindly meaning friends, soon found his old tastes reviving, and sought to build his tabernacle on this unstable earth by a second marriage. Again his hopes were deferred by the birth of a daughter before his heart was gladdened by the possession of another son, but when that joyful event occurred, all former griefs and disappointments were forgotten. He daily beheld a David Hunter living and blooming before him. To make his bliss still more secure, another equally promising boy was added to the domestic nest. Then he fondly thought his "mountain stood strong;" but the gracious command, "my son give me thine heart," was not obeyed, and though Ephraim was joined to his idols he was not to be let alone. When the precious David was four years old and Willie two, that scourge of parental hearts, scarlet fever, again blighted his hopes, and David slept beside his brothers. A long interval of comparative peace followed this last sad bereavement. His heart reposed again in the fair promise of his remaining son, and trusted that by having his name changed he should yet see the accomplishment of his lofty ambition.

Shortly after the second marriage of Col. Hunter, his

peace had been again seriously ruffled by the attachment of his daughter Sophy to a young man, every way calculated to secure her happiness; but in the eyes of the misjudging father, by no means the kind of person to mate with a Hunter, of Hunter's Lodge.

Henry Bradford, a lineal descendant of the venerated pilgrim whose name he bore, had little of this world's wealth, though rich in faith and good works. His parents had emigrated, when he was but an infant, to Ohio, where they had accumulated property enough to educate their son, and leave him in possession of all the real comforts of life. He was a Methodist, and although many of the aristocratic families in the neighborhood belonged to that branch of the church, Col. Hunter could not divest himself of the idea that as Methodism was emphatically a dispensation of the Gospel to the poor, it was by no means suitable to persons in his position. He thought he wished his children to be religious, and even expected at some future time to make quite an acquisition to the cause himself; for still his memory embalmed the Christian graces, and meekly triumphant death of his lamented Sophy.

His habit was to attend the services of some church once on the Sabbath, selecting that where he should meet the most pleasant friends, hear the most eloquent discourse and the finest music; unless, indeed, anything particularly interfered in the form of an agreeable ride, an attractive book, or the like. Methodists were entirely too zealous for him. They often introduced religious conversation into company, where it was decidedly in bad taste, and one good brother, who had visited his dying wife, had taken advantage of his courtesy, to speak to him personally on the subject of his soul's inte-

rests. These customs were very annoying, so, notwithstanding Henry Bradford was admired as well as respected by all who knew him, Col. Hunter politely but firmly vetoed his proposal for the hand of his daughter.

Mrs. Rodney, who had been for several years a widow, spent much of her time at the residence of her brother, and now, by her presence, strengthened him in his purpose to discountenance this misalliance. But during the time of her absence, events took a turn that she could not have expected, and that, in her opinion, never would if she had been at Hunter's Lodge.

Sophy inherited her mother's disposition, and submitted in silence to her father's will. But the light faded from her eye, and the color from her cheek. Her daily increasing resemblance to her mother in this decline, attracted the attention of her thoughtless father, and touched him in a tender part. He could not see her thus so evidently withering before his eyes without a pang of apprehension. He struggled awhile to resist it, vainly hoping she would rally, and then sought an interview with Mr. Bradford. He, with manly frankness, acknowledged that he had by no means resigned the hope of marrying his daughter, though she had steadily refused to correspond with him without her father's sanction. This dutiful sacrifice on her part, together with his nervous dread of her deathlike aspect, wrung from him a reluctant consent to the marriage.

The wedding was without any parade, which arrangement would have corresponded entirely with the wishes of these two devoted hearts, but that Sophy well knew it would have been far otherwise if she had chosen for her portion worldly rank and splendor. Col. Hunter scrupulously settled upon his daughter her mother's for-

tune, attended to all that was likely to promote her comfort, and then kindly but gravely saw her depart for her western home. Here was another broken link in the chain that bound this Ephraim to his idols—but it was not enough.

Henry and Sophy found in each other all that their intimate and holy relations promised. Their lives glided on in the enjoyment of perfect congeniality, a blessing to each other and to all around them. Once they visited Hunter's Lodge, with their two children, but what real harmony could there be between persons who were living for two widely different objects?

Two years after the visit ended, Mrs. Hunter died. She was a pleasant tempered woman, a good manager of her household, and was quite satisfied to allow her husband to enjoy life in his own way. Her influence was not much felt for good or evil, and the natural sorrow for her loss was soon nearly obliterated by an event that seemed to crush effectually every hope from the heart of this severely tried father.

Col. Hunter was riding out one fine morning with his idolized son, for whom he had recently purchased a beautiful horse, and in all the fond pride of his heart admiring the beauty and noble bearing of the laughing boy, as he gaily cantered by his side, when suddenly Willie's horse took fright, and starting aside, threw him from the saddle. To spring from his own horse, to raise him in his arms, was but the work of an instant. But alas! life was apparently extinct, and the agonized father would only suffer him to be taken from his embrace by some of the servants who were working in an adjoining field, when relaxing clasp gave way in a deathlike swoon. He soon recovered enough to ascertain that one of the men

had galloped for Dr. Torrence, and as they were not far from home, the still lifeless form of his darling was conveyed to the house. It was long before the utmost skill of the physician, and the tenderest care of father and sister, could detect the slightest sign of life. Gradually however, a scarcely perceptible pulse, and tremulous motion of the features, gave intimation that the vital principle was still there.

After long protracted agonies of hope and fear, he began to recover, but all the vigor and bloom of healthy childhood were gone, and it soon became painfully evident that the mind had suffered almost equally with the body. The slightest agitation produced long fainting fits, which always left him more feeble than they had found him. The unhappy father watched him day after day, measuring the intervals between the faintings, and still clinging to the least indication of amendment till he was able to walk about his room, and then to ride out. He seemed to enjoy the change; but his greatest pleasure was to listen while Virginia read to him some simple story or poetry adapted to his juvenile taste. He was soon permitted to read to himself, but beyond this, his physician would not allow his mind to be exercised; otherwise he became feverish or irritable. Ordinarily he was gentle, patient and affectionate.

While Death, the relentless enemy of Col. Hunter's domestic peace, spared his little Willie, he was busily employed in the happy home of his daughter, Mrs. Bradford. He first laid her husband in the grave, and then her youngest child. But at this point our story commences.

CHAPTER V.

FEARS BRIGHTENING TO HOPES.

"With different aims—living for different ends;
How bring all these to one harmonious whole?"

OVERTASKED, both mentally and physically, as Mrs. Bradford necessarily was, she found herself quite unable to leave her room for several days. Her friends urged her to rest still longer, but she would not consent to the dangerous indulgence of seclusion, and resolutely exerted herself to resume her position in the family, and by promoting the happiness of those around her, to find a balm for her own wounded peace.

Owing to the accumulated afflictions of the family, Virginia's education had suffered in some important respects, and her sister immediately induced her to commence a regular course of historical and biographical reading and to give daily attention to French and music, while Willie seldom found her too busy to read a story or poem or to listen to him. As to Harry, he was not yet satisfied with riding about with his grandfather, visiting all his favorite haunts, or stopping at the quarters to visit his old friends among the negroes, especially Daddy Jack and Mammy Letty, where he was petted quite as much as was good for him.

Letty had made several visits to her Miss Sophy while she was in her room, but her loving heart overflowed

with joy and thankfulness when she saw her once more seated by her own fire-side.

"Oh, Miss Sophy, how can I help crying when I see you sitting in dat very chair, where your blessed mother, my beautiful mistress, sat so often? and you too, de very image of her. She used to come and read and talk to poor ole Letty as long as she could walk out at all."

"But, dear mammy, she is only gone a little before us. We hope to see her again after a few short days or weeks at most, in that glorious morning, about which you love to sing."

This allusion touched the enthusiastic feelings of the pious old woman, and she burst out,

"In the morning, in the morning
In the morning we'll go home."

Rocking herself back and forward in time to her singing, while Mrs. Bradford mingled her clear tones with the somewhat hoarse voice of her nurse, the old woman seemed indeed to be transported beyond these gloomy shores of death to that bright world where "all tears are wiped away."

"Well now I do feel better, honey; but a sight of you brings up de ole times, when my own mistress was alive, and I can't help feeling heavy like. And den dere's poor Mars Davy—I so 'fraid he won't be up dere. He don't tink 'bout dese tings."

"Not yet, perhaps, but he is greatly changed since I was at home before. Dear Willie's illness presses heavily upon him; he cannot but see the uncertainty of all earthly dependence. We must pray without ceasing, that his eyes may be opened to learn the solemn lessons that are intended by these repeated afflictions."

"Oh yes, Jack never fail to pray for Mars Davy every night. But I never hear of his going to church now a days. He just read and wander 'bout de place, and seem sort o' lost. And dere's Miss Jinnie, poor ting, she goes to church just because other folks do, I s'pose; but now you come, Miss Sophy, I do hope you try to teach her de right way."

"Oh, mammy, I feel almost overwhelmed when I think of the difficult path I have to tread, to avoid saying or doing anything that would bring a reproach on that profession that I alone, of all my family, make. You must pray for me, that I may have grace to walk before them unblamably, and be made the instrument of showing them the way of salvation."

"Bless de Lord! bless his holy name for sending you to teach 'em all de right way. I believe you will, honey, and my ole eyes will see them all coming home, like doves to dere windows. Sometimes I tink Mars Willie getting some light, he so fond of his verses. Now only dis morning he came and read to me 'bout de wayfaring man, and he really seem as if he felt it, poor boy."

Mrs. Bradford seemed to think a moment and then replied, "I have at times great hopes of his being led to his Saviour, his heart is so tender; but at present I fear his feelings are more poetical than religious."

"Well, after all, honey, it is better to walk by faith than by sight." And brightening again with the thought, she added, "If he could only be a happy Christian, that would be better than name and land, with health too."

"It would indeed. I think you say the preaching is still at Mt. Carmel, and that Mr. Preston is a powerful preacher?"

"Ah, dat he is, my chile. He wake up some of de folks, I tell you. I only wish Mars Davy could have been dere last Sunday. He preached right at him, 'bout de fashion of dis worl passing away. Don't you tink, Miss Sophy, you get him to go?"

"I hope I shall after a while, but now he is so silent and reserved, that I am unable to judge of his feelings or views. But it is nearly dinner-time, and I will see you again soon."

Mrs. Bradford encountered her father and the two boys, as she drew near home. They had been to the village, and Col. Hunter told her that he had met Mr. Preston. "I asked him to come and see you, Sophy, and bring Mrs. Preston with him."

Mrs. Bradford's heart swelled with gratitude, at this unexpected kindness, as she replied: "Thank you, dear father; I did not know you were acquainted with them."

"I was not; but I thought you would like to see them, so I introduced myself to Mr. Preston on your account."

"Oh, that was very kind. Do you know who is the junior preacher on the circuit?"

"His name I think is Selden, but I have never seen him. However, I shall know all the brethren after a while." As he said this with a slight smile, he put his arm round his daughter, and drew her to him, adding, "come, lean on me, you do not look strong enough to hold yourself up."

Happy, hopeful tears prevented any reply to this half playful, half serious speech, but she leaned her head on his shoulder for a moment, and felt that the barrier of reserve was fast passing away.

Willie seemed to have found in Harry just the com-

panion he needed; one who would watch over him and assist him in any little difficulty, so that Col. Hunter's mind could be perfectly at rest while they were together, and he was at liberty to think of something apart from his blighted hopes, while Willie could enjoy the fresh air and gentle exercise, with just the kind and amount of mental stimulus that his condition required. His father had procured a little wagon, in which Joe and Pete, their constant attendants, could draw him when he was fatigued, and the four boys often spent the whole morning, roving about the woods, the wagon having capacity enough for a lunch as well as for Willie. Harry was allowed thus to devote himself to the care of the interesting invalid, as long as the mildness of the Indian summer made it suitable; for his education, through the able instructions of his father, was already advanced beyond his years, and he was yet to young to enter college.

Mrs. Bradford found that she had a task before her, somewhat different from what she had expected. When her one visit to her home, after her marriage, was made, even with her high-minded husband to sustain her, she almost shrunk from familiar intercourse with her father, as with all his kind and courteous manner, there was blended a dignified reserve that seemed to say, "You have chosen your own path. It is one in which I cannot walk with you. There is an impassable barrier between us." But the face of affairs was now entirely changed. This last, most sad calamity of poor Willie's had made him another being. The shattered fragments of his aspiring hopes were continually before his eyes, at the same time calling forth all the tender emotions so long dormant in his heart. He was no longer young, and it was vain to think of living to establish another family. He stood

bewildered amidst the wreck, and longing for some sympathizing bosom, on which to lean. At this most favorable crisis he was led to look towards his daughter. The thought of her quiet strength of character, and unwavering love for himself, came over his bruised spirit like balm, thus plainly proving, though to himself unknown, that it was the graces of the Christian character alone that could minister comfort in his sorrow-clouded home. Thus the apprehension of coldness on the part of her father was wiped away from Mrs. Bradford's mind. But a more insurmountable obstacle lay before her, and one that could only be removed by a higher power than her own. This was the great ignorance of spiritual things, and the still greater distaste, that pervaded the minds of the whole family.

Col. Hunter had, thus far, lived as if the body and its interests were immortal, while the soul, if a thought was bestowed upon it, was considered as a mysterious, accidental appendage, little understood, but rather poetical and ornamental than otherwise. What could be expected of children under such guidance, and with every facility for the enjoyment of this world's pleasures lavishly bestowed upon them, other than that they should follow in the same path?

Virginia had felt little of her sister's influence during her former visit, for she had been absent at school nearly all the time, and though she often heard a word of affectionate admonition in the humble cabin of her nurse, it made but a transient impression, and was soon swept away by the thoughtless mirth of her associates. Now the recent deaths and affliction in the family, together with her sable garments, had prevented her from joining the festivities of the neighborhood during the past year,

and she must not be too severely judged, that she sometimes calculated the time required by the etiquette of society, before she could again appear in the gay circles of fashion.

Mrs. Bradford, in early life, had been in the habit of attending the Episcopal church with her mother, and had become much attached to the devoted and useful minister of the parish; she therefore would have found little difficulty in gaining her own consent to worship there, as often as her father would go with her. But the flock had in the meantime changed shepherds, and the present rector entertained sentiments so opposed to her own views, that she could neither conscientiously listen to him herself, nor be the means of taking others where they must hear doctrines so unscriptural, making the church and its ordinances usurp the place of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Once, on Sunday, Virginia consented to go with her sister to the Methodist church; but Mr. Preston was absent at a protracted meeting, and his place was supplied by a less interesting preacher. On her return, her father inquired how she liked the preaching.

"Oh, father," she replied, "it might have been all very good for some people, but that old Mr. Clements is so quaint and queer that I could scarcely help laughing. He said that when he was converted, the grace of God went right through his heart like an electrifying machine."

"Why, my daughter," rejoined Col. Hunter with a scarcely suppressed smile, "you must have misunderstood, he could not have said anything so absurd."

"Indeed, father, he did, and I saw several persons laughing. I am sure if I had not caught Sophy's eye, I

should have laughed too, and he talked all the time almost as strangely; not the least like preaching."

"What did Sophy say to it?"

"She says he is a very good man, only he had not much education, and those who know him, respect him so much, that they do not mind his mistakes. She says he is almost too old to preach now, but Mr. Preston had engaged somebody who was taken sick and could not come, so there was no one else."

These circumstances, so well calculated to leave a false impression on the minds of Virginia and her father, served to deter them from going to the Methodist church again for some time, and in order to suit all parties, it was arranged that Virginia and Harry should ride on horseback with Col. Hunter, while Mrs. Bradford and Willie should occupy the carriage. As is frequently the case with old and favorite servants, nurse Letty was allowed to ride when the weather was bad. Proud and happy was she, in her Sunday dress and neatest cap, which had long taken the place of the flashy head handkerchief, the vanity of more youthful days, thus to find herself seated opposite to her beloved Miss Sophy and Master Willie; nor did they fail to enjoy her pious conversation as they rode along. At Mt. Carmel, Virginia took her sister's place in the carriage, and went to Woodbury, where, with Willie and her father, if he was not drawn aside by some more attractive object, she attended the Episcopal church. If they did not return in time, which was frequently the case, Mrs. Bradford took Virginia's horse and rode home with Harry leaving old Letty to finish her gossip with some of her friends till called for, or if she chose, to take the near cut through the woods, at her leisure, with Jack.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DARK WOOF SHOT WITH A SILVER THREAD.

"She dwells in quiet scenes of home,
A glory in a shady place.
A strength'ning light to hearts bowed down,
And broken in life's race."

On one occasion, when Virginia was making a visit of a few days at the house of a friend, Mrs. Bradford sat sewing in the library, where the family usually passed the evening if there was no company. Willie was leaning on his father's shoulder, and whispering in his ear.

"Well, my dear boy, I will take it into consideration," was the smiling reply.

"Then I know you will." And turning to Harry he said, "Don't you want one too, Harry?"

"Want one—what, little uncle?" said Harry, looking up dreamily from his book.

"Oh! a guitar. Sister Sophy says she will teach me to play, and father has almost said I may have one. I should like to learn 'Oh, tell me the form of the soft summer air,' that Mary Allington sung so sweetly when she was here last week, and 'Oh, call my brother back to me;' and so many beautiful songs. Don't you want to learn, Harry?"

"No, I don't think I care to learn, Willie. I shall not have time."

"I suppose not," said Willie sadly, "for you will have

to go to college, and then what shall I do without you?"

"Why, you know, Willie," said Mrs. Bradford in a cheerful tone, "I am to teach you till you are well and strong enough to go to college too. But it is late now, and here is Pete with your lights, so let guitars and college wait till to-morrow, for further discussion."

After the boys were gone, Col. Hunter sat silent for some time, and then looking up, he said, "Sophy, now that the pleasant weather seems over, would you not like to have Harry commence with Mr. Lambert?"

"Yes, I think he has had holidays enough, and he is very willing to resume his studies. In good weather he can walk through the woods."

"But there will be no necessity for that. There are horses enough, and Pete or Joe can go with him to bring back the horse. One of them is enough to wait on Willie. I saw Mr. Lambert last week, and he is ready to receive him at any time."

"Thank you, dear father, and I think I can teach Willie from time to time, as he is able to bear it, and have no doubt that a little pleasant mental effort will contribute to his recovery. He has a sweet voice, and can easily learn to accompany it with the guitar. Do you not think he is better since he has taken more exercise in the open air?"

"Sometimes I think so, but dare not trust it. I am in daily apprehension of some new calamity."

"Dear father, do not be so desponding; let us rather hope that he will continue to improve, and live to be the comfort of your declining age."

"Ah, my child, it is in vain for me to hope; every bright vision of my youth is destined to be shrouded in

the grave. Oh, Sophy, death, death is my bitter enemy! His ruthless hand seizes on my treasures, one after another; I am only waiting now to see which is the next victim."

Mrs. Bradford was deeply moved by this melancholy picture, but she struggled with her feelings and replied, "Do not look at it in that light, but try to think of the blessings still in your possession."

"In *possession!*" he interrupted, with almost a shudder; "how long can I count upon *possession.* This night the monster may be preparing his dart. Oh, Sophy," and he held her closely in his arms, "you are now my greatest comfort, and for that very reason I tremble lest you too should be snatched away. How much you are already doing for my poor Willie! If he is ever to be restored, it will be through your care and tenderness. But it cannot be. There is no David Hunter to fill my place when I am gone."

"As you intend to have Willie's name changed, why not have it done at once, and let us begin now to call him David."

"It would be of no use, when it is so manifest that he cannot live. There are two Davids already in the graveyard."

They were silent—Mrs. Bradford feared that her father was not in a condition to be reminded of a better world, where there is no more death, but she rejoiced that he had begun to pour out the long-hidden sorrow, and believed that the time was now at hand when he would receive a brighter view.

She ventured to remark: "In all my afflictions, dear father, I have been sustained by the thought that this life is only a school, where we are to be prepared by a

discipline, sometimes painful, but sanitary in its effects, for an eternal blessedness, with all our loved ones in our father's house above."

"Oh yes, but that is so visionary, so distant, that I can derive no consolation from the idea."

"And yet you believe it?" she inquired, with anxious eyes.

This question, so direct, so impressive, was not to be evaded, and he replied, after a moment's pause, "I suppose I do, but I have no realization of it."

"That is perfectly natural, as you have perhaps given the subject but little attention. It is one of a nature so diverse from those that continually and imperatively demand our regard in the daily walks of life, that it requires a special effort to bring the mind to bear upon it in the first attempt, but the more we contemplate it the more easy and natural it becomes—or rather, I should say, the more assistance we shall receive to overcome the natural earthward tendencies of our souls."

"Well, my dear, I am at least glad that you have something to comfort you. I can give you but a gloomy home. Sunshine has forsaken Hunter's Lodge, and its master is no longer a companion for anybody."

"Do not say so, my precious father, your home is a delightful one, and your presence was never so pleasant to me as it now is."

"You are a dear child, my Sophy, and oh, how precisely like your angelic mother"—— He could bear no more, but rising and folding her in his arms, he dropped upon her brow one gem, more precious than pearl or diamond, for it gave her the welcome assurance that his heart was softening in the furnace, as she trusted, to

receive a new and better impress. He said no more, but retired for the night.

Busy thoughts and bright anticipations banished sleep from the pillow of Mrs. Bradford till a late hour, and it was not till Nanny stood by her bedside to assist her in dressing, that she was entirely awake.

"Good morning, Nanny," she said; "why, how you have let me sleep! I believe I have a dreamy recollection of hearing you make the fire, but I must have fallen asleep again in a moment."

"Well, Miss Sophy, I'm glad you did; I'm sure there's no call for you to disturb yourself so early. Aunt Charity can get de breakfast ready jest as well, for all de people like to please you."

"I believe they do, Nanny, they are very good; but I should be sorry to keep my father waiting for me."

"Oh, you needn't fear 'bout Mars Davy, for dere's Mr. Blackwell come to talk with him 'bout de new doors to de carriage house, and he ain't gwine to let him off for one good hour, I bound; he always talk so long.

"Then if the new doors are to be settled we can be ready. Where is my wrapper? There now, give me my collar and then I shall not want you any longer. You may tell Israel to ring the bell as soon as he pleases."

When again alone, Mrs. Bradford's thoughts recurred to the conversation of the last night. The remembrance was like a cordial to her anxious hopes, for sad and despairing as were the expressions to which her father had given utterance, the fact that the seal of silence was removed gave hope of consolation, and she entered the breakfast-room with a more elastic step and brighter

smile of greeting than usual. Col. Hunter, too, seemed less dejected than she feared. He talked with Harry about his studies, and promised Willie the guitar upon which he had set his affections, cautioning him, at the same time, not to become so absorbed with it as to neglect his rides and walks.

"Oh, but sister Sophy says she will only teach me if I take exercise out doors every day."

"Very well, I believe we can trust the case to her," said Col. Hunter, casting a look upon his daughter expressive of so much grateful, trusting love as again to make her heart bound with thankfulness.

While they yet lingered around the table, Harry was the first to espy four horses with their riders emerging from the woods and galloping towards the house. "There they come now," he exclaimed; "there's Aunt Jinnie, and George, and Jessie Carter, but who is that with them?"

All inspected the merry party as they came gayly up the avenue, but Harry's question remained unanswered till they entered the room, and the stranger was introduced as Miss Louisa Ross of Baltimore.

"Have you all breakfasted?" inquired Mrs. Bradford.

"Oh, yes," replied the young gentleman; "I assure you, Mrs. Bradford, these young ladies were so unmerciful as to have me called up by sunrise this morning, and that too after keeping me from going to bed till nearly midnight."

"Unmerciful!" interrupted Jessie. "Only listen, Virginia! did you not hear him tell Jim to wake him at peep of day?"

"Of course I did, and who was the cause of our late hours, but the same gentleman?"

"I am sure I am innocent of that, for how could I escape from such magnets?" Then turning to Col. Hunter he continued more gravely: "We have come, sir, to borrow Miss Virginia for a few days longer. Miss Ross, my sister and myself are going to spend a few days at Forestdale, and Mrs. Allington begged us to bring her with us. Can you spare her?"

Col. Hunter smiled upon the gay young group and readily consented, provided her sister had no objection to the plan.

"Oh, no," Mrs. Bradford responded, "I shall have company enough with the boys, when you are out, and Jinnie, you must carry my love to Mrs. Allington, and say that I hope to see her and the girls here soon."

"Thank you, dear Sophy, I should like to go, but if you will be in the least lonely, I will stay."

"I shall not, dear, and you have been staying at home so much that I am glad you can visit your friends now without restraint. George, you will bring her back safely?"

"Depend upon me, Mrs. Bradford; I am solemnly pledged to my mother to defend these young ladies with my life. I only fear there will be no opportunity for me to distinguish myself. Have you heard of any robbers or wild beasts in the neighborhood lately, or must I depend upon opening gates skillfully, and turning aside impertinent branches? As for Miss Ross, she has been so scientifically educated in equestrian performances that she may give me a little exercise in following her over fences and ditches."

Miss Ross laughed and promised not to favor them with a steeple chase on this expedition.

Virginia speedily made her preparations for the visit, and they were soon in their saddles, sending back their merry peals of laughter through the woods, cheering the sobered hearts they left behind.

CHAPTER VII.

A VEXED QUESTION AGITATES THE FAMILY.

"Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off your relish for spiritual things; in short, whatever increases the strength and authority of the body over the mind; that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself."—MRS. SUSANNA WESLEY.

IN due time the guitar arrived, and with great eagerness Willie commenced his lessons. His delicate ear and soft rich voice gave promise of excellence in the simpler styles of music, and at present he was not allowed to attempt any other, while his passionate enjoyment of poetry combined with song was a source of the highest delight. Mrs. Bradford was able by reading and conversation to impart much general knowledge without overtasking his mental energies. Harry's progress was steady and vigorous under the direction of Mr. Lambert, and he was becoming daily more important to his grandfather.

One day when Willie was quietly learning a song in Mrs. Bradford's room, the lesson was interrupted by the hasty entrance of Virginia and Harry. They came apparently in high excitement, both speaking at once, and claiming attention.

"Well, what is the momentous subject that seems to have nearly deprived you both of breath?" inquired Mrs. Bradford in surprise.

"Oh, mother!"——began Harry.

"Now stop, Harry, let me speak first," interrupted Virginia; and after pausing to take breath, she resumed, "Sister Sophy, I want you to grant me a favor; please do not refuse, my heart is set upon it."

"What is it, dear? I am sure if I can gratify you, I will with pleasure."

"I'll tell you. There is going to be a dancing-school in Woodbury this winter, and I want Harry to go. Now you will let him, I know, for you said to Mrs. Allington the other day that you did not think there was any harm in dancing."

"My dear Jinnie, do not allow yourself to make such inaccurate statements. Do not misunderstand me, dearest child; you doubtless received that impression from my words, but it is of the utmost importance in hearing, to gain a clear view of the truth, even the very spirit of it, else in repeating you may convey a false impression. I think I said that in the simple act of dancing, there could be no sin; but in the present state of society, it is so necessarily connected with danger to young and inexperienced persons, as to be highly inexpedient at best."

Virginia's animation was a little chilled by this gentle reproof, but she soon recovered and replied, "Oh, but in this case, you and all the parents can regulate it so as to avoid the danger, and it will be so dull for Harry to be left out if we all go. Charley and Rose Carter, and the Thorntons and Newtons are going; please consent."

"Dangerous reasoning again, dear. If it is inexpedient or even wrong, will the fact that others venture make it safe for you?"

"Oh, but father does not think it wrong, he wishes me to go. Now please, dear Sophy, do not refuse. Let Harry go, won't you?"

Harry, seeing his mother grave and silent, took her hand as he kneeled beside her, and looking in her face, waited, with some solicitude, for her answer. She smiled upon him, and as she pressed her lips upon his upturned brow, he saw that tears were in her eyes, while she answered that she must think about it before she gave her decision."

"Oh dear! how provoking," said Virginia, "when I am in such a hurry to let Mrs. Carter know, because she has the subscription paper. Charley is waiting with it now," and she turned again to her sister, but seeing no relentings in her placid but firm features, she left the room quite in a pout. Henry followed grave and thoughtful, for he well knew that unless his mother could be convinced of the usefulness of a measure, persuasion was of no avail.

They had scarcely left her, before Willie, who had been listening and reading alternately, put in his plea. He thought it would be delightful to learn to dance, and putting his arms round his sister's neck, he used all the eloquence of his gentle nature, to induce her to intercede with his father for them all to go.

"Dearest Willie," she said, warmly returning his caress, "you must remember this life is only a time of preparation for one of eternal duration. We must soon, all of us, lie down in our own beautiful graveyard where we stood last evening, watching the long slender branches of the willow sweeping over the marbles, and talked about my beloved mother and yours, and our little brothers, sleeping in their quiet beds. When we are placed beside them, Willie, where will our spirits be?"

"In heaven, won't they?" said the simple-minded child, looking up wonderingly.

"Do all spirits go to heaven, Willie?"

"Oh, no; but if they are good, if they love the dear Saviour, and try to obey him, he will save them, and take them to live with him in his Father's house."

"Certainly; but will dancing tend to prepare us for that great change?"

"I suppose not. But you say that it is right for us to have some amusement and exercise. Dancing is good exercise and amusement too."

"Yes, but we must choose those kinds of exercise and amusement that will best promote the object and at the same time lead to no injurious consequence."

"But what harm can dancing do?"

"Many very good people think it's perfectly harmless, Willie, and I believe that if properly regulated, it is decidedly better than many other amusements of young persons."

"Then do you not think father will let me go?"

"Not so fast, my sweet boy; we have not viewed the subject in all its aspects yet. It is very necessary for us to take food and drink—we could not live without them; but some kinds of food and drink are too exciting, and destroy life instead of prolonging it. Do you not see it so?"

"Why, yes, you know if I eat pastry and drink coffee or tea, I am not so well, though I love them so much. Since you have been here, and I have lived on milk, I am getting so strong. Why, I can walk all over the farm without being tired. Yesterday when I stopped at mammy's, she called Daddy Jack to look at me. She said I had some red in my cheeks, and he said, 'That Miss Sophy's doings, bless her heart. She'll cure you up, Mars Willie!'" and he laughed with boyish glee.

"We ought to be very thankful, dear, that you are so much better. But to return to our subject—how clearly you may see that dancing, though good as exercise and amusement, may, like pastry, coffee and tea, be unhealthy to the mind as well as the body, and all the more that it so generally charms people out of all moderation. Most persons are so bewitched by it that they are led into all kinds of extravagance, such as waste of money, time, health, etc. I fear it would not be as conducive to your health as running and riding about in the garden and woods. What do you think, dear?"

Willie sighed as he owned that it would be better for him to let dancing alone, and with his usual sweet docility, urged the point no farther, but again found entire contentment with his music and his books. How he would have resisted the effect of seeing his sister and young friends in all the delighted exhilaration of dressing, and starting off for the dancing-school, and all the droll accounts of what occurred in connection with it, together with his father's known approbation, had not other circumstances turned the scale, is uncertain.

Mrs. Bradford was in her room when Harry came up stairs to go to bed, and the door was open. Willie had taken a longer ride than usual and gone to bed early, he was sleeping sweetly and Harry called his mother to look at him. As they stood by him, he smiled and murmured indistinctly some words, of which they could only catch,

"'Tis all too soon to press
The glittering fetters of worldliness."

This excited Harry's curiosity. His mother took a book that lay open on the table and passing into her

own room, she pointed out the lines, and he read them. They were these:

THE MAY BALL.

Brilliant and gay was the lighted hall!
'Twas the night of an Infant Festival.
There were sylph-like forms in the mazy dance,
And there were the tutored step and glance,
And the gay attire, and the hopes and fears,
That might well bespeak maturer years;
The sight might to many eyes seem glad,
But I own that it made my spirit sad.

I saw not, in all that festive scene,
The cloudless brow and the careless mien,
But vanity sought the stranger's gaze,
And envy shrunk from another's praise,
And pride repelled, with disdainful eye,
The once-loved playmate of days gone by.
Alas! that feelings so far from mild
Should find place in the breast of a little child.

And how, thought I, at the morrow's rise,
Will these fair young sleepers open their eyes?
Will their smiles the freshness of morning speak,
And the roses of health suffuse their cheek?
No! with a wearied mind and look,
They will turn from the pencil, the globe, the book—
A longing and feverish glance to cast
On the joys and pains of the evening past.

Parents! 'tis all too soon to press
The glittering fetters of worldliness
On those tender years, to which belong
The merry sport and the bird-like song.
What fruit can the trees of autumn bring,
If the fragile blossoms be nipped in spring?
Rich stores will the summer of life impart,
If ye spoil not the bloom of the infant heart.

Harry made no remark, but put the book aside and took a seat by his mother, leaning his head on her shoulder.

"Well, my dear boy, what do you say about the dancing school?"

"Oh, mother, I have given up all thoughts of it?"

"Why so, my son?"

"There are a good many reasons why I do not wish to go."

"Will you tell me some of them?"

"Oh yes, all of them, if you have time to hear them."

"It is quite early yet, and I am ready. Begin."

"In the first place, I believe it would take more time than I have to spare, for the girls are already planning to meet at each other's houses to practice, and then I know you do not wish me to go."

"But I did not say so."

"No, but then—oh mother, I know now why the tears came in your eyes, when you looked at me and kissed me. I am sorry I thought of it for a moment. Mother, I know I look like my father—I would rather be just such a man as he was.

The tears no longer stood in the mother's eyes, but fell fast on the dark locks that were pressed closer to her bosom. After a few moments' silence she said—

"But, my Harry, there are even higher motives than these, are there not?"

"Yes, but so mingled with memories of my father that I can scarcely separate them."

"I would not have you separate them. Let them ever be united. You do not need to be reminded of my opinions respecting these alluring amusements; you have often heard them. But, my precious child, do not forget the last days of your noble father; treasure up his words in

your heart. They will be a shield for you in the hour of temptation, when I am no longer near you."

"Dear mother, I wish it was not necessary for me to go to college—or that you could go with me."

"I sometimes wish so too, Harry, but my place is with your dear grandfather; to contribute to his comfort and Willie's as far as possible is my present duty."

"I suppose it is, and I remember your favorite precept—'Duties are ours; events are God's.'"

"Yes, Cecil has strengthened me in many a wavering moment. But it is not more my duty to stay here than it is yours to prepare yourself for the solemn responsibilities that lie before you."

"Mother, you know I have often said I hoped I should be a minister; but I am ashamed that I ever thought of it now."

"Why, my son?"

"Oh, because I shall never be fit for it. I believe I am more trifling since I have been here, than I ever was before. I wonder I ever thought of it."

"Perhaps it is rather that you have more to keep you in good spirits. I used often to fear that my sadness would make you too grave and sedate for your years; I am glad to see you more lively. Still you must watch yourself, for a spirit of mirthfulness has often led its possessor into levity and irreverence. Even our most harmless dispositions, without settled religious principle, may run into vices; when that is firmly established in the heart, it will keep all in harmony with itself. You have made me very happy to-night, by having found out for yourself, that dancing would not advance you in the path

you have chosen. It was a conflict between temptation and principle, and the victory will strengthen you for future attacks. But it is now time for us to go to sleep; so good night, my darling," and with an affectionate embrace, they parted.

CHAPTER VIII.

A GRAVE DISCUSSION GAILY ENDED.

"For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him. Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD, as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD."—1. SAM. i. 27, 28.

THE point was thus easily established that dancing was at least inexpedient for Willie, and Harry, with his usual good sense, had found out that it was not the thing to prepare him for the kind of life he had chosen, and in spite of the discouragements he met with, in an increasing knowledge of himself, he was unwilling to renounce it. Virginia alone, was left to join the class. Mrs. Bradford felt certain that with her the question would not be so easily settled, and consequently she was not surprised to see her bring her work the next afternoon, and quietly establish herself in her room.

Virginia had broken away from her sister the day before, in undisguised displeasure, for her heart was set upon having Harry for a companion. So not without some self condemnation on account of her childish pet, she determined to make another effort to gain her point. After discussing various topics, not knowing how exactly to approach her subject in the most favorable way, she caught a bright idea from seeing Willie with Joe, just setting off to meet Harry.

"Do you not think, Sophy," she began, "that Harry is studying very closely, just now?"

"Yes," Mrs. Bradford replied, "as Mr. Lambert wants him to offer himself for the Sophomore class, there are some things he wishes to review before he goes."

"Are you not afraid he is applying himself too closely? He has so little recreation. That is one reason why I was so anxious to have him go to dancing school."

"I have not thought so, dear, and I have watched him attentively. Do you notice anything of faltering in him? It is not at all necessary for him to be hurried in entering college; he is quite young enough to defer it another year."

"I think so too. It will be so dull when he is gone. I do think, sister, you ought to let him have a little pleasure before he is sent to prison. You know George Carter said, when he came home from college, that he felt as if he were let out of prison."

"But I have no idea Harry will regard it in that light; and the danger of young men in college is not that of being too grave and devoted to study. The faculty would have less trouble if that were the tendency, I imagine."

"Oh yes, of course. But Harry is not like other boys, he is not going to give the faculty any trouble, I know."

"I hope not; but he has never yet been tried without his mother's eye upon him, and her counsel at his ear. He is a good boy, but he is still human."

"Oh, Sophy, I have not the least fear of Harry; he is the best as well as the dearest boy I know, except our sweet Willie, he is just like him—only"— she added with a merry laugh, "he is entirely different."

The thought of that difference instantly checked her

mirth, and she sighed as she said, "Dear Willie, I wish they were more alike."

"While both sat silent, Virginia began to reflect that she was making but poor progress towards the accomplishment of her wish, so she rallied her forces and began again.

"I am glad, at any rate, that father does not think as you do about dancing. I suppose you think it wrong for me to go."

"No more than I regard the whole tenor of your life as wrong. Dear Jinnie, you are living for this world and its pleasures, regardless of the eternity upon which you must soon be called to enter. Dancing, is in itself as harmless as any other graceful exercise of the body, except such as can be practised in the open air. Its accompanying evils are to be encountered quite as surely in fashionable parties, only that the fascination of dancing rivets the chain, that in other cases might be broken. The god of this world has blinded your eyes, dearest, so that you see not its speedy termination, and the necessity of educating yourself to enter upon that which is eternal. Oh, my sweet sister, do not forget or neglect this. Your present pursuit of happiness constantly results in disappointment. In a perfect delirium of anticipated pleasure, you again and again fly to some scene of festivity, only to find yourself vexed and weary. Depend upon it, you have that within which craves a higher and more satisfying portion. Do not try to entice Harry into these delusive pleasures. He is now happy without them, and so far as he has light, aiming at a preparation for that life and immortality which are brought to light in the Gospel."

"But after all, Sophy," said Virginia, much less moved

by this affectionate address than her sister could have wished; "do you not think Harry is too old for his years? Why he will sit and talk with father for an hour at a time, with as much gravity and decorum as if he was at least thirty. It is too amusing, I declare; he seems to know as much about the farm, and the affairs of the nation too, as he does about Latin and Greek."

"I am not sorry for that; they are branches of knowledge that will be useful to him in any position."

"I suppose they are, but he is too young now. There is some danger of his being an old man before he is a young one, and I am sure he needs more relaxation from study."

"I have not thought so, but I will give it careful consideration, for I have always considered physical education of the utmost importance, and most sinfully neglected in this country. How many men we see, with minds of the highest order, and stored with valuable knowledge, compelled to sit down in comparative uselessness, because of their intemperance in acquiring it. Yes, I call it intemperance, for they stimulate their brains with intense unvaried study, till the poor body absolutely withers, and the nervous system becomes irretrievably deranged. Several instances of this kind came under my notice while Harry was a baby, and I determined to give him, if possible, a vigorous body, as the first requisite to receiving mental cultivation, if he did not get through college till he was thirty. So you see, dear, we are entirely agreed on the necessity of exercise and all that can contribute to the fullest development of the physical powers, only we take different modes of accomplishing the end."

"But what harm can there be in dancing? He is not

a preacher yet, if you are determined to make one of him at last."

"I have no such idea, believe me, my dear Jinnie."

"Indeed! then we have all been under a singular mistake," she exclaimed, regardless of the grave tone of her sister; "and I am delighted to be corrected. I am not the only one that will rejoice. Aunt Rodney, I know, as well as others, has been distressed at the idea of throwing away such talents—and if"——

"Oh, stop, my child; you must say no more on the subject. You forget yourself."

"Why, how? I am sure every body says Harry has so much natural eloquence, and such a fine voice, that he would be an ornament to the bar if he should be educated for it."

"You do not understand me, my dear child," said Mrs. Bradford, as she laid her hand gently but impressively on her young sister's arm; "Listen to me. When I say that I have no idea of making a preacher of Harry, I mean, that it is not the work of poor mortals to make preachers. Should it be the will of his Divine Master to honor him by making him his messenger, we neither of us believe that the highest endowments of intellect would be sufficient to qualify him for the work. He alone who sends him forth, must inspire him with wisdom from on high. Oh, Virginia, you remember how near we were to losing him, when he was four years old, when he fell into the river. We thought he was gone forever. His father prayed in the anguish of his soul for his restoration, promising, with divine assistance, to bring him up for his service. He was restored to us from the grave. I suppose he must have heard much that was said around him, when we thought him insensi-

ble, for after he was almost well again he was sitting on my lap, and looking in my face said, 'Mamma, did God take me away a little while, and then, because you and papa cried did he give me back again?' I told him it seemed to be so. After thinking awhile he said 'Mamma, am I your little boy now, or am I God's little boy?' I asked him which he would rather be. He lay for a little while silent again, then looking up with a sweet smile he said, 'I should like to be both. Papa read about the man of God. What is a man of God, mamma?' I told him it meant a prophet, a preacher. 'Well then,' he said, 'if I am a good boy when I grow up to be a man like papa, I will be a preacher; shan't I mamma?' From that time he often spoke of it, and seems never to have lost his desire to be a minister."

Virginia's heart was touched by this simple narrative, and her eyes were suffused with tears, as she put her arms round her sister's neck, saying—

"Dear Harry! How near we were to losing him. I remember hearing about it at the time, but had almost forgotten the circumstances."

"That is only natural, dear; but now you must not be surprised that both Harry and myself think dancing out of the question, with all the time it would occupy, and all the facilities it offers to slide into modes of spending time unprofitably."

"But then it would give him such good exercise, and make him graceful. But what do you see that pleases you so much?"

Mrs. Bradford was looking out upon the lawn before the windows, and called her sister to come and see if Harry needed dancing to give him exercise, health, or even grace of motion

Virginia looked. There was Harry—cap off, hair blowing in the wind, cheeks glowing, and eyes sparkling—the very embodiment of health, beauty, and fine spirits—while Willie stood on a garden chair, quite as happy, throwing the ball for him and old Rover to catch.

Just as the laughing attracted Mrs. Bradford's attention, Harry had, by some stratagem, obtained the prize from Rover, and both were bounding back to the starting point for a new race. Virginia clapped her hands, in exulting sympathy with the game, while she cried out—

"Oh, Sophy! Look at him—look at him. He is so beautiful—so graceful!"

Mrs. Bradford laughed, and said—

"Yes, I think he will do without dancing-school."

Virginia laughed too, and sprang away to join in the frolic on the lawn.

A few days before the dancing-school was to be opened, Harry, with Pete behind him on the same horse, was slowly pacing along from school towards home, when he met Willie, with his faithful attendant, Joe. The two riders immediately slipped from their seats, and Willie taking the vacant place, the others walked on by his side. Just as they approached a turn of the road, where a high bank hid the long line of cabins, they heard confused sounds of loud voices, and the screams of children. Looking up, they perceived a column of smoke rising above the bank, in the direction of the cabins. Immediately, as they advanced, they could see that the fire was bursting from one of the roofs. Harry instinctively turned to Willie, and seeing him pale and trembling, lifted him

from the saddle, and led him to a log, where they sat down. He did not speak, but Harry was with him, and his soothing, cheerful voice re-assured him, so that he could even bear to look at the fire. But just then a loud cry was heard.

"Oh! Sam, Sam, my child—he is there—he will be burned to death!"

This was too much, and Willie sank fainting in Harry's arms, who had the presence of mind to send the boys for help. One of the men came and carried him home, still insensible.

Harry ran before to soften the shock to his mother as much as possible, and Willie was soon on his own bed, with his quiet, efficient sister administering such remedies as were usually effectual.

Col. Hunter was happily absent, but the fire quickly summoned him, and, learning the condition of his son, he left the hands to put it out their own way, and was just in time to see Willie open his eyes, and gasp out, with a distressed countenance, "Is Sam burned to death?"

"Sam is alive and well, my dear boy. So make yourself perfectly easy. Nobody is hurt."

Willie smiled faintly, and holding his father's hand, lay with his eyes closed a little while. Then he spoke again, and said he felt better now he knew nobody was hurt. Mrs. Bradford persuaded him to swallow a cordial draught, and then try to sleep. When he waked, he was evidently less prostrated by the shock than had been the case heretofore. The next day, when Col. Hunter came into his daughter's room, he was pleasantly surprised to find Willie removed to the sofa, and talking cheerfully with Dr. Torrence.

The doctor rose to meet him, saying, as he extended his hand—

"Colonel, I was just speaking of leaving this neighborhood."

"I hope not, doctor. What is the matter?"

"Why I find I have so successful a rival in Mrs. Bradford that I am in danger of losing my practice."

"Oh! if that is all, you need not go, for a physician can do comparatively nothing, unless his prescriptions are followed by faithful, judicious nursing; so you had better stay, and take her into partnership."

"Ah, that is true, and on those terms I may consent to remain. I shall leave Willie to the care of my partner now, unless she wishes for a consultation. Good morning."

In this way the question of dancing-school was settled, as far as Willie was concerned, by his being absolutely unable to attend; otherwise the urgency of his young friends might have overcome the arguments of his sister.

While Willie was still too feeble to join the family circle down stairs, Mrs. Preston called, and was received in Mrs. Bradford's room. After some conversation on general subjects, she said that she had come to ask a favor. It was that Harry might attend the watch-meeting, and pass the remainder of the night at their home. By so doing, it would be no disturbance to the family, and at the same time a great gratification to them, with whom he was a great favorite. Mrs. Bradford at once gave her consent, if Harry wished it. Mrs. Preston had already ascertained that point, so it was decided that Harry should go to the watch-meeting.

Soon after Mrs. Preston took leave, another visitor was announced. This was the mother of Sam, the

hero of the fire. When she learned that she had unintentionally been the cause of her young master's illness, her penitence was absolutely ludicrous. The fact was that Sam, a youngster of a year old, was asleep in an upper room of the house that caught fire, but had been awake some time, and left by his mother in the next cabin, while she went out on an errand. Coming home and finding her house in flames, in the confusion of her fright, she forgot where she left him—consequently her vehement cries.

As soon as she could gain admittance, she hastened to make her peace with her young master, came weeping and wailing and cast herself down at his feet, most humbly begging him to forgive her. Willie was at first much affected by the simple creature's distress, and said everything he could to soothe her. Then her gratitude was as extravagant as her sorrow had been, and she declared that Mars Willie never was like any other boy she ever knew; that he was just the beautifulest angel that ever lived. The wild, fantastic gestures and peculiar language were finally too much for his gravity, and he laughed till his sister was obliged to send her away, assuring her that they would both come and see her and Sam as soon as Willie was well enough.

CHAPTER IX.

WATCH-NIGHT.

"'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours,
And ask them what report they bore to heaven."

"To-day is yesterday returned; returned
Full powered to cancel, expiate, raise, adorn,
And reinstate us on the rock of peace.
Let it not share its predecessor's fate,
And like its elder sisters, die a fool."

YOUNG.

ACCORDING to the previous arrangement, Harry took tea with Mrs. Preston on New Year's eve, highly delighted to go with them to the watch-meeting. The services were not to commence till nine o'clock in the evening, so there were several hours for pleasant social intercourse before the time. Both Mr. and Mrs. Preston enjoyed Harry's society, for boy as he was, the unusual development of his mind and character, combined with perfect modesty and simplicity, gave a charm to his conversation not always found in more mature years.

As the evening advanced, several persons came in, and before nine all proceeded to Mt. Carmel. The night was dark and stormy, but they had not far to go. The little church stood a short distance out of the village, and the parsonage was one of the houses nearest to it. Cheerfully making their way against the strong gusts of wind that drove the snow in their faces as they passed up the side of the hill, it was still a pleasant change

when they met the light and warmth within made more agreeable from the contrast; and the wild blast, as it whistled around the walls, harmonized well with the voices that were singing:

"Come let us anew our journey pursue,
Roll round with the year,
And never stand still till the Master appear.
His adorable will let us gladly fulfill,
And our talents improve
By the patience of hope, and the labor of love.

"Our life is a dream; our time, as a stream
Glides swiftly away,
And the fugitive moment refuses to stay.
The arrow is flown—the moment is gone;
The millennial year
Rushes on to our view and eternity's near.

"Oh, that each in the day of His coming may say—
I have fought my way through;
I have finished the work thou didst give me to do.
Oh, that each from his Lord may receive the glad word,
"Well and faithfully done!
Enter into my joy, and sit down on my throne!"

As not many had yet assembled, they gathered around the stove, and while they enjoyed its genial warmth, joined the swelling chorus. Then, as the seats began rapidly to fill up, they dispersed to their various places.

Mr. Preston opened the meeting with part of the well known Watch-night hymn.

"Oft have we passed the guilty night
In revelling and frantic mirth.
The creature was our sole delight,
Our happiness the things of earth.

But oh, suffice the season past!
We choose the better part at last.

"We will not close our wakeful eyes,
We will not let our eyelids sleep;
But humbly lift them to the skies,
And all a solemn vigil keep.
So many nights on sin bestowed,
Can we not watch one hour for God?

"We can, oh Jesus, for thy sake
Devote our every hour to thee,
Speak but the word, our souls shall wake,
And sing with cheerful melody.
Thy praise shall our glad tongues employ,
And every heart shall dance for joy."

He then made a few remarks explanatory of the character and object of the occasion, exhorting all who had not yet professed themselves the friends of Jesus, to seize the fleeting moment, and not allow the dawn of another year to find them among his foes. These observations sank deep into Harry's heart. Could he be a foe to that Saviour who gave his life for his soul? The thought startled him. But dared he call himself his friend? Before the question was fairly answered, the call to prayer prostrated almost the entire audience on their knees. As usual, there were some who came merely as spectators, for the gratification of an idle curiosity. Such kept their position, but they were comparatively few, and in remote parts of the building.

The prayer lost much of its effect upon Harry, for a worthy brother next to him, seemed to think it incumbent on him to do his own praying, which would have been very well if he had had the same consideration for others. As it was, he made his petitions in so loud

a voice as almost to drown that of Mr. Preston, making it impossible to follow either.

Mr. Preston preached the first sermon from the text—"Redeeming the time." He spoke forcibly of the value of time, as given us to prepare for eternity; of the many ways in which even Christians too often waste it. Of the uncertainty of living to see the close of another year, and the infinite importance of life beyond the grave.

The sermon was short, and in style more of an exhortation than an exposition, and Harry at first felt disappointed that it was not of the same instructive character as those he was in the habit of hearing from him, but he soon saw that it was best adapted to the peculiar occasion. The deep silence and attention of the hearers bore testimony to its being a word in season.

When the speaker took his seat, one single voice commenced singing:

> "Eternity is just at hand,
> And shall I waste my ebbing sand,
> And careless view departing day,
> And throw my inch of time away?"

But as the words did not seem to be familiar, few others joined, and they proceeded no farther. It was enough—perhaps more solemn from its falling upon the ear with such perfect distinctness, while all around were still.

Then the exercises were changed to something like a love-feast, and as one after another rose to speak, it was like a chronicle of the past year. One told of the inroads of death in her little heart circle—how the companion of life's journey faltered by the way, and now

slept the last sleep; of the comforts realized in the sustaining presence of him who has declared himself the father of the fatherless, and the widow's God. Another spoke of the glorious change from darkness to light experienced during the twelvemonth gone, and the determination to spend all the remaining years of his life in the service of him who had performed the mighty work. Some poured out their gratitude for blessings temporal and spiritual, while others mourned over broken promises and forgotten vows, but rejoiced in a renewed purpose to retrace their steps to the narrow way, that leads to life. One with form so slight, and cheek so pale as to make it seem imprudent for her to be there, though brought wrapped up and in a close carriage, expressed her joy in being favored to meet her sisters and brethren, to watch once more the coming in of the new year, that year which she believed would be her last on earth. With exulting faith she spoke of the world to which she was hastening, where there would be no more suffering, no more sorrow, but fullness of joy, forever and ever. Harry thought he had never heard more beautiful and interesting experiences.

The second sermon was by the junior preacher of the circuit, Mr. Selden, a mere youth in appearance, but full of zeal in his master's cause and love for the souls of men. He addressed himself particularly to the young, and mentioned some of the circumstances of his own conversion.

He was a gay, thoughtless youth when, by the death of father and mother, he found himself the sole guardian of a little sister, in a land of strangers. His voice trembled when he touched upon the solemn injunction of his last remaining parent, especially to watch over her soul's in-

terests. In childhood he had been received into the church, during a revival, but now realized the saddening truth, that he was a mere nominal Christian. Thus brought to a consideration of his case, he resolved to become a real follower of the Lamb in order to discharge his trust. But time passed on without the performance of the vow, though the little creature was daily twining herself more closely about his heart. Suddenly she was snatched away by death.

Stunned by the shock and almost broken-hearted at the reflection that he was unworthy to retain so great a treasure, he turned in earnest from the unsatisfying joys of this world, and devoted heart and life to him "who gave, who took, who will restore; who doeth all things well."

Every word came home to Harry. He seemed to remember the least neglect of his own sweet sister, the most transient feeling of impatience now rose before him with strange clearness; for though no one else had ever accused him of wanting aught in brotherly tenderness, where is the human heart that does not find chronicled in sharp lines, many offences against the dear departed? mere nothings at the time, but which start into monstrous proportions as soon as the grave closes over their object.

Smarting under the upbraidings of conscience, Harry lost part of Mr. Selden's remarks, and was only recalled to the present scene by the strange stillness of the house when he paused. He looked up and following the direction of many eyes to the clock, found that but a few moments remained of the old year. "Just taking its flight,' Mr. Selden resumed, "and carrying with it, not only an account to God of broken vows and forgotten promises

of amendment, but I trust also, of vows renewed never to be broken, and promises faithfully to be performed, of more earnest devotion, and active service than ever.

He sat down. Another instant and the clock struck twelve. Harry thought he should never hear it again without recalling the thrilling sound as it then broke the deep hush of that moment.

Again Mr. Preston rose and spoke of the gratitude all ought to feel who were spared to enter on another year, still the recipients of so many mercies. He then called upon all who were willing to renew their covenant with the new year, to join him on their knees, in singing the Covenant Hymn. Instantly the whole congregation were bowed in humble reverence before the Lord of life.

"Come, let us use the grace divine,
And all with one accord,
In a perpetual covenant join
Ourselves to Christ the Lord;

"Give up ourselves through Jesus' power,
His name to glorify;
And promise in this sacred hour
For God to live and die.

"The covenant we this moment make
Be ever kept in mind;
We will no more our God forsake,
Or cast his words behind.

"We never will throw off his fear
Who hears our solemn vow;
And if thou art well pleased to hear,
Come down and meet us now.

"Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Let all our hearts receive;
Present with the celestial host,
The peaceful answer give.

"To each the cov'nant blood apply,
Which takes our sins away;
And register our names on high,
And keep us to that day."

At first not a tongue seemed to be silent, and the full swelling notes shook the house; but as they proceeded, voice after voice was lost amid tears and sobs, till the concluding lines were scarcely audible from the overwhelming emotions of the kneeling crowd. Before they could again control the tide of feeling that swept from heart to heart, the trembling words of the apostolic benediction floated over them—and the watch-meeting was dismissed.

Mrs. Bradford had carefully refrained from expressing to Harry his father's ardent desire that he might be called to the ministry of the Word, lest earthly motives, even of the highest and purest character might mingle with his obedience to the divine mandate. She believed that he already felt, though himself unconscious, the gracious drawings of the Spirit, hence his great delight in theological studies, in sermons and in all that related to the interests of the church. Unlike most others of his age, he seemed to find great pleasure in conversing with ministers and members of the church, rather seeking than avoiding their exhortations and instructions. He was on the most easy terms with the Prestons and was always a welcome guest in their parlor or study, in which latter place he frequently spent his leisure hours.

Mr. Preston and Mr. Selden had both repeatedly urged Harry to unite with the church, but he invariably declined, saying that he could not consent to take that step unless he could do it as a Christian, and of his being one he had no assurance. His watchful mother did not

urge him; she felt that he was surrendering himself more and more to the dominion of strong religious principle, and she trustfully and gratefully left him to its guidance.

The tender-hearted Willie leaned upon him and looked up to him with the confiding fondness of a little child joined with the respect due to a stronger and superior mind. Harry was little more than two years his senior, but the feebleness of Willie's health had so checked his growth and development, that he looked many years younger. This sensitive boy could not long remain unaffected by the atmosphere of spirituality by which he was now surrounded, and with great thankfulness Mrs. Bradford saw his artless mind expanding under the genial influence of religion. His favorite music, though still loved, was gradually giving place to sacred song, and his scripture lessons were the theme of constant questioning and conversation.

When Mrs. Bradford first returned to her father's house, she found him stunned and prostrated under the final wreck of his hopes, so passive amid his grief and disappointment, that it seemed the only comfort of which he was susceptible, to yield without an effort to the guidance of others. He knew that his daughter had been bereaved of those nearest and dearest to her, that her home had been desolated, and yet he did not realize that any grief could equal his grief. He saw her daily covering up her wounds to pour the balm of woman's tenderest sympathy into those of others; and unconsciously to himself, his affection and respect for her increased so much that she became the guiding star of his life. So completely did he surrender himself to her mild sway, that he was even willing his children should

become Methodists so that they only resembled his beloved Sophy. The more the beautiful consistency of her character unfolded to his view, the more bitter was the pang of self-reproach, that he should have cast her from him as he did on her marriage; and although pride still withheld the confession of his error, he would have given worlds to recall her noble husband to life, that he might take him to his heart as a son, and by his future kindness atone for the haughtiness of the past. But it could not be, and he could only calm the rebukes of his conscience by lavishing indulgences on those that were left. He saw the beauty of true religion in his daughter's every word and action, but as yet it did not seem a thing for him. The present was too painfully real for him to extend an inquiring glance into the future. To him there was no future. He could only lie down in his despair and hug in secret his broken idols. With the indomitable spirit of a man, a Virginian, he forced himself to attend to the business of life, but this was the surface; within was the gnawing worm of memory, whose keenest pang was self-reproach.

CHAPTER X.

WEDDING CHEER IN THE OLD HOUSE.

"Young folks will ride, and young folks will walk,
Young folks will smile, and young folks will talk;
Always the same since Adam and Eve,
Their glances, and blushes, and whisperings weave
Soft, silken nets that grow stronger each day,
Till the pair are close caged forever and aye."

WINTER wore away, and one dark rainy day in spring, our old friend Letty was busy at her wheel, when Jack came in looking not quite so complacent as usual.

"Well, what de matter now, ole man? What dog got you bone?"

"No dog at all, wife, and I glad you say dat to me, cause its set me to tinking. It aint no consarn o' mine if Mars Davy's land not ploughed dis year; de good Being knows what weather to send, better 'n ole Jack."

"You'd better get dat coat off now, 'fore you get your death a cold. I declar it's soakin' wet, an you not young as you use to was. Come, it's ill wind dat blows nobody no good, and I willin' to get a chance to speak to you once in a coon's age."

"Long wid ye, den. What you got to say while I cobble up dese ole shoes?"

"Well, I say dere someting goin' on up to de house."

"Dat no news. I s'pose someting goin' on every day."

"Oh, go long, Jack, you so trifling. You know what I mean, someting uncommon."

"Well, what den?"

"Oh, I just b'leive Miss Jinnie goin' to get married to Mars George Carter."

"Whew! you just found dat out? I been watchin' dem two children—walkin' and ridin' 'bout dis long time. No matter who else go long, dey manage be forard of all de others, or else long way behind."

"I bound for you, you always know more'n anybody else. What you keep it so close for?"

"'Cause I live long time now. I learn best to keep still tongue. But what you s'pose Mars Davy and Miss Sophy tink 'bout it?"

"Why, Mars Davy very well pleased. He always set great store by de Carters. Dey got de blood too, you know, dat's what he likes. Miss Sophy care more 'bout other tings. She set her heart on Miss Jinnie putting off dat business till she 'seek first de kingdom of God and his righteousness.' Poor thoughtless young things! I fraid it be de blind leading de blind. Well, trust de Lord. May be he bring 'em in both together."

"De Lord grant it, I say, ole woman."

It was true that Mrs. Bradford was beginning to look with anxiety upon the growing intimacy between her young sister and George Carter. Mr. Carter, the father of the young man, had been the bosom friend of Col. Hunter, and a union by marriage of the two families had often been talked of. The estates lay in close proximity; indeed a part of Gaywood was almost embraced by the adjoining parts of Hunter's Lodge, so as to make it desirable that both should belong to the same person. Col. Hunter could not be induced to allow any division of Hunter's Lodge, that having always descended entire to the oldest son of the family. He had other farms sufficient for the portions of the other children. Mr. Carter,

during the last years of his life, had been under the necessity of selling part of his property, which made it more necessary to increase the portions of his daughters if possible by marriage. After his death, Col. Hunter took a generous pleasure in carrying out the plan so dear to his friend. Willie and Rose Carter were the pair most likely to accomplish this desired object, till the wreck of his health gave a long rest to the subject.

The union of George and Virginia of course could do nothing to promote the above mentioned object—though Mrs. Bradford knew it would be very gratifying to both her father and Mrs. Carter. But was George the man to promote the lasting happiness of her gay and thoughtless sister? This was a question that often rose in her mind as she stood a deeply observant witness of passing events. Having disappointed the wishes of her father in her own marriage, she felt that great caution was necessary, and dared not interfere. She faithfully warned Virginia as well as her father of the importance of this crisis in human life. Col. Hunter listened to her even with deference, but ended the conversation by asking her if she wished to see his mirth-loving Jinnie united to some solemn, prosy black coat. Virginia only laughed, and blushed, saying that she was sure George was a great deal better than she was, and indeed they both intended to be very good.

Summer has come and gone. The evenings are getting cool, and a bright flickering light streams from the window of Jack's cottage. Within, all is neat and cheerful. The wheel is put aside, and the old nurse sits by the fire talking with her youngest daughter Nanny, who has dropped in on her way to the house. Jack sits in the corner, smoking his pipe, with half closed eyes, not quite enough awake to join in the conversation.

"Well, honey, I dare say they are mighty pretty, and if I am spared to see to-morrow, I'm goin' up to de house. Somehow, dese cool days cripple me up so. But I must see Miss Jinnie married, anyhow. White satin is it?"

"Yes, white satin, all trimmed with the elegantest lace—you never see anything so beautiful."

"Hush, child—didn't I see my own Miss Sophy when she was dressed a bride, I reckon dere aint nothing now-a-days to come near to dat."

"Well, I'm sure dey didn't wear bonnets in dem ole times to compare to Miss Jinnie's. Such flowers! and lace on dat too. Oh my! but wont she look pretty. And they say Miss Jessie and Miss Mary Allington is to be dressed almost as pretty as Miss Jinnie herself. Dey's all to wear pink silk de next day, at de great *infar*. I s'pose dey'll wear different ones at all de grand dinners."

The old woman listened with evident pride and pleasure to the recital of the splendors preparing for her darling's bridal; but soberer thoughts came in to check in some degree this exultation.

"Ah well, my chile, I hope they wont forget they got souls as well as bodies. Poor things! as my granny used to say, de black ox not trod on dere toe yet. Mars George right nice young man, and what dey call handsome too, but oh, Nannie, he ain't got de grand look dat Mars Davy used to have, and 'cordin' to my thinkin' he can't hold a candle to Mars Henry Bradford. He had such a good look—his eyes just shine wid all sorts o' goodness, and when he smile!—oh oh! Mars Harry's got de very same look, eyes and teeth and all. But, Nanny, how Miss Sophy get along wid all dis gaiety? She so busy now she don't stay long when she comes in

here, and I getting too stiff in de jints to travel up dere every day."

"Oh, Miss Sophy—why she just Miss Sophy. She head of every ting. Mars Davy tinks nothing goes right without Miss Sophy. First Miss Jinnie call her to look at some of de finery, den Charity send for her to tell her 'bout de icing of de bride cake. She no sooner dar, dan Mars Davy say, 'Where's Sophy? Pete, go and tell your Miss Sophy I wish to speak to her.' And she jist so kind to everybody—she never seem to be tired, till she come up to bed. Den she almost too sleepy to let me undress her. But she never too tired and sleepy to smile, and say, 'Thank you, Nanny.' But it's time for me to go and make up the fire in her room. And there's Daddy almost dropped de pipe out of his mouth, he's so sleepy. Good night."

Old Letty was as good as her word, in seeing her Miss Jinnie married; but as she was not very well, she came away as soon as she had had the honor of shaking hands with the bride and groom, and solemnly pronouncing her blessing on them.

Nannie had her orders to make a faithful report of the events of the evening, and she waited impatiently till she saw her coming.

"Well, Nannie, I declare, I thought you never coming. I reckon dere 'nough up dere in de kitchen to get de dinner widout you. Tell me how dey all got on after I came away."

"Well de supper was very grand and all dat. You saw all de nice things. After supper, Miss Jessie and Miss Mary played on de piano, and then dey wanted Mars Willie to play and sing for them. At first he didn't seem to like to, but Miss Ross and all of 'em got

round him—so they brought his guitar and he sang a beautiful song. I've heard him sing it before—'bout 'take her and be faithful still.' Everybody was so still. I do think you could have heard a pin drop. Two ladies came out into de hall while I was on de stairs. They didn't see me, and one said she never in her life heard anything so sweet. The other said she thought his looks was as sweet as his music. They made him sing three or four times. Some of de young people tried to get up a dance, but it didn't seem to go off like it used to. Poor Mars Davy used to be head of all such cuttings up, and always would dance hisself with de puttiest young lady in de house. But he seem so different now. When dey begin last night, he just looked at 'em a moment, and then he gave a sigh as if his heart would bust, and walked right out into de dining-room. I was standing in de hall, close to de door, for I was determined to see all de fun as was a goin' on. Dey soon quit de dancing; somehow, it didn't seem like de dancing I used to see. I reckon dey all know Miss Sophy didn't feel like having dancing in de house where they had seen so much trouble."

The wedding over, the family at Hunter's Lodge settled down to the accustomed routine, but missing the vivacity of Virginia and her young visitors, Mrs. Bradford found it more and more necessary to exert herself to counteract the gloom of her father. Harry was increasingly absorbed in his studies, and the near approach of the time for him to enter college, saddened her, but she resolutely turned from her own griefs to please and cheer those about her.

Several other weddings occurred in the neighborhood. Miss Ross was married, and Jessie, with her brother and

Virginia, went to Baltimore to be present on that occasion. There Jessie won the heart of a young man named Munroe, the groomsman of her friends. Several Baltimore gentlemen came to attend their wedding, and one of them, Mr. Austen, succeeded in persuading Mary Allington to leave the home of her childhood to share his, in the country near Baltimore.

Then came the parting with Harry, and every member of the household felt it as a personal affliction. His grandfather, till then, had not realized how necessary the noble boy had become to him. In his gentlemanly deportment and manly good sense, he found a companionship, that he was unable, perhaps unwilling, to find elsewhere.

Willie lost an elder brother; one who was at once a protector, a teacher, and a companion, for in all their excursions he was safe if with him. And Harry was continually pouring into his mind the result of his own acquirements. In this way he gained from him, as well as from his sister, a taste for knowledge which only made him feel a keener disappointment in being unable to pursue it farther.

But to Mrs. Bradford, the parting was like losing the sunshine of her life. She knew that she was walking in the path marked out for her by her heavenly Father, still it at first required a struggle to subdue the ardent desire she felt to go to Carlisle and make that her home while it was Harry's. If she could go and take Willie with her, it might be an advantage to him. But then if he should be sick away from home, the responsibility was too serious, and the utter loneliness of her father—no, the temptation was strong, but short, and she meekly submitted, rejoicing that she could be useful to her father.

None knew of the conflict, and the victory was complete. Harry's vacations were each a festival of the affections to every person on the place—indeed, to the whole neighborhood. Thus time passed away, shedding alternate joys and sorrows on the dwellers of Hunter's Lodge until the second year of Harry's college life.

CHAPTER XI.

A SUMMONS IN HASTE.

"Wan she lies,
Sick, sick indeed! and oh how oft she sighs
For him to smooth her pillow—others speak
Kind soothing words, and fan the burning cheek,
Dim forms glide round her couch, but what are they?
She longs for him—and he is far away."

VIRGINIA'S visits to Hunter's Lodge were frequent but short, for she found her new home at Gaywood, more congenial to her lively temperament. Mrs. Bradford, deprived of the society of her son, turned to the companionship of her father and brother for consolation; but neither of them could fill the vacant place. Instead of finding the support she really needed, they were both dependent upon her. During the day Willie was her constant companion, and looked to her not only for instruction, but also for amusement. At night, when the business of the day was over, her father would have sunk at once into gloomy reminiscences if she had not taxed her utmost ingenuity to divert his thoughts into other channels. She did not seem to be aware of it herself, but this constant strain upon her spirits, manifested itself in a corresponding languor and dejection, when the effort was no longer necessary.

One day, when she had been attending her class at the parsonage, she lingered after the other members had

retired, talking with Mrs. Harlan, the wife of the new minister, one of her girlhood's friends. Mrs. Harlan was one of those bright little spirits whose vocation it seems to be to shed sunshine on all who come near them, and she had been watching, for some time, the pale cheek and heavy eyes of her friend. She placed herself beside her on the sofa, and tenderly looking at her, said, "My sister, something presses upon you more than usual. What is it? Will you not tell me?"

This affectionate address touched the trembling string. Mrs. Bradford leaned her head on Mrs. Harlan's shoulder and let the long suppressed tears flow without control; but not long.

"Carrie, I am really ashamed of this," she said, smiling through her tears, "for I do not know of anything to cause such weakness."

"Well, I do. You are completely worn out, and have not the cordial of our dear Harry's society to keep up your spirits."

"Dear sister, I have really nothing to wear me out; my father is so indulgent that he scarcely allows me to open a door for myself. He would have half the servants on the place to wait on me if I were willing. I am very happy, and cannot conceive why I should be so foolish."

"Why, Sophy! I can see it all. You are continually exerting yourself to keep up your father's spirits and to make Willie happy. You never think of yourself; never take any recreation—it is too much for you. You miss Virginia and her bright young company. Why do you not get Susan Allington to come and stay with you till Harry comes?—Willie is very fond of her."

"That would be very pleasant, but I do not like to

ask her of her mother, now Mary and Hattie are both gone."

"But Hattie returned last week; and then there is Rose Carter, she has been at home a long time. I am sure if you are as great an admirer of beauty as I am, it will be a treat to have her to look at."

Mrs. Bradford smiled and acknowledged that Rose was indeed surpassingly beautiful, but added that she loved the downcast modest expression of Susan even more than the most brilliant beauty.

"Well I am going to Mrs. Allington's to-morrow, and I shall invite her to make you a visit."

"Thank you, Carrie. I always love to have Susan with me—I think I feel better already, and it is time for me to go home."

The next day, Mrs. Harlan was as good as her word, and came, bringing Susan with her. The kind girl immediately engaged Willie in singing, reading or talking, so that Mrs. Bradford had time to rest. In the afternoon she complained of being chilly and they persuaded her to lie down while they went to take a walk.

Finding her still asleep on their return they were careful not to wake her and she slept on till Col. Hunter, coming home, and missing her cheerful greeting came up stairs. He was shocked to find her in a heavy sleep and flushed with fever. Dr. Torrence was instantly sent for, and though he tried to speak encouragingly he could not entirely conceal his apprehensions of a severe attack. She complained of a burning pain in her head, but tried to soothe her distressed father, saying that she should be better in the morning.

Susan wrote a few words to her mother, explaining the case, and begging her to come to the Lodge as early

in the morning as she could. Col. Hunter refused to go to bed, but remained in the adjoining room with Willie all night, keeping Susan in a constant state of alarm by his gloomy forebodings.

Morning brought Mrs. Allington and Mrs. Harlan, who insisted on staying with Mrs. Bradford alternately, as long as she needed their attention. Susan, the kindest and best of nurses, was ready to do anything in the sick room or down stairs. In the course of the day Mrs. Carter and Virginia came; so there was no lack of nurses, especially as every servant on the place was clamorous "to do something for Miss Sophy."

The fever continued to increase for several days after, producing unconsciousness, sometimes delirium. Nothing could exceed the alarm of Col. Hunter. He was not willing that the doctor should leave the house for a moment, and yet he did not believe that either medicine or skill could save her. He sat hour after hour bathing her hot brow and hands, until in her wanderings she would talk of her husband, and even seem to think he was present; then a flood of grief and self-reproach would overwhelm him, and he would hasten from the room to recover sufficient composure not to attract the notice of others.

Willie astonished every one, for instead of the timid trembling boy, who had so long been the object of incessant care and watchfulness, he suddenly assumed a new character and became the sustainer and comforter of others. It was Willie's persuasive tones that were most effectual in calming the almost wild agitation of his father. When fear and sorrow reached such a point as to attract the attention of the sufferer, it was Willie's voice and Willie's hand that could allay the tempest, and lead him

away, only to return subdued and docile as a little child. He had not so long sat at the feet of his pious self-denying sister without drinking in large draughts of her spirit. Now the same quiet self-forgetting love shone in all his words and actions.

During the earlier periods of Willie's illness the irritable state of his brain made it necessary to avoid opposing him, and had he not been endowed with remarkable sweetness of disposition, the injury would have been permanent. It had, at least, tended to foster some degree of selfishness; but the holy principles of Christian love, distilled drop by drop, had eradicated it, as far as it can be eradicated from the congenial soil of the human heart. He saw his most dear sister and friend, hovering as it were between life and death, and profoundly sensible as he was of the irreparable loss to himself, should she be taken away, yet he knew that to her the change would be glorious, that an abundant entrance would be ministered into the presence of her Saviour. He laid aside his own grief to comfort his father and to think of poor Harry, far away, perhaps not even aware of the illness of his beloved mother, for no blessed telegraph had then been established between his home and Carlisle.

Harry was now within a week of the close of his college year, and Mrs. Bradford had said on the first day of her seizure, "Do not let Harry be alarmed. Do not send for him unless I should get worse." But the disease had been steadily gaining ground, and it was decided that he must be summoned. Mr. Harlan undertook the sad task, and all were now anxious for his arrival.

Mrs. Bradford had asked if he was coming, and in the

confusion of her ideas supposed he was just at hand. Nervously inspecting the shadowy forms as they glided about the darkened chamber, she often asked, "Is that Harry?"

Those who were *off duty* in the sick room, were almost as much interested in watching the approach to the house. Horses had been sent to meet the traveller at Woodbury, by the order of Col. Hunter, even before it was probable that he could arrive, while he vexed his imagination with every kind of prognostic of evil. Sometimes the letter had never reached him, the mails were so irregular; then if he had received the letter, it would only aggravate the affliction should any detention occur on the road.

Notwithstanding all these distrustful fears, a kind Providence watched over Harry, and brought him home in safety, but, as might be supposed, anxious and distressed. At the village, he found a few words from his old playmate Susan, that imparted strength if not comfort. With womanly sympathy and tact, she alone had thought how likely it was that a servant would give him an account, equally vague and exaggerated, of his mother's condition.

Col. Hunter and Rose Carter were together watching in the portico, when he came in sight. Rose sprang to her feet, and with a burst of tears, rushed up stairs to communicate the news. Happily, the horses had been heard, and Mrs. Harlan was just in time to arrest the kind but thoughtless girl, before she attracted the attention of the invalid, and accompanied her back to the portico. It was well she did, for Col. Hunter could only clasp his grandson in his arms, without being able to utter a word. Poor Harry turned from him to seek in-

formation elsewhere, and first encountered Rose, whose agitation confirmed his worst apprehensions. But Mrs. Harlan was calm, and immediately reassured him by saying,

"She is no worse, my dear Harry, and now that you have come we believe she will be better. Dr. Torrence thinks her anxious expectation of your arrival has aggravated her symptoms. I will go up and ascertain if she is prepared to see you." Turning to Rose, she added, "my dear Miss Carter, pray control your feelings. Look at Harry—see how pale you have made him."

Rose said she was sure she did not intend to frighten him, and excused herself by saying that she was so glad to know he had come, she lost all power to speak. Harry drew a long breath, and his color began to return. He asked several questions about his mother, but neither his grandfather nor Rose could give him much satisfaction, so that it was a sensible relief to turn from their incoherent answers to Susan, who greeted him with glistening eyes but a smile that spoke of hope.

"She wishes to see you now, Harry; will you come up with me? I know you will be careful not to agitate her."

The darkness of the room prevented Harry from at first noticing the emaciation and paleness of his mother, and he was enabled with some steadiness of voice to reply to her welcome. "My Harry"—was all she could say, but her uplifted eyes finished the sentence, and he bent his head on the pillow beside her, before he could control himself enough to speak in a cheering tone, and express his hope that she would soon be better. She was too weak to reply, but drew his face close to hers and lay quietly holding it there, while a sat-

isfied expression, almost a smile, stole over her face. After awhile, she shut her eyes and soon fell asleep.

She was still in this state when the doctor came in. After feeling her pulse, which did not as usual waken her, he said, "Well, my friend Harry, I find you are as good a doctor as your mother. I hope you intend to study medicine; your very presence seems to be healing. I have not found so good a pulse since she was taken sick."

"Do you really think she is better, sir?"

"She certainly seems so. I have thought all along that as soon as we could get you here, I should be a mere cipher."

"I cannot allow that. You must be with us as much as possible, and I will try my skill in nursing. These good friends of ours must be exhausted now, and I am quite fresh."

"Fresh, are you?" looking in his face, "Well, then, the air of Carlisle must be good for bleaching. Your color does not confirm your words."

"Oh, my color will be well enough directly. My grandfather and Rose did frighten me at first, but I understand the case better now. Where is Willie? he is not sick, I hope."

"No, Willie has been head nurse, and we at last pursuaded him to lie down. You will be surprised to see how well he is."

This conversation had taken place in the portico, with which the room communicated, and the doctor, after looking at his patient again, and leaving some directions, took leave.

When Mrs. Bradford waked, she said she felt quite refreshed, and seeing Harry and Willie both sitting by

her, she smiled and said, "My two dear boys;" and as Susan came into the room, she moved her hand towards her, adding, "and my dear girl too."

Susan took the white, slender fingers in hers, and softly smoothing the stray locks from her forehead, whispered a caution by the authority of the doctor against any unnecessary effort.

When Doctor Torrence came in again, he said that if a comfortable night could be secured for his patient, he should expect to find a perceptible improvement in the morning. Turning to Susan, he asked, "Who watches to-night, Miss Susan?"

"I shall for one," interposed Harry.

"Oh, no, Mr. Harry," replied the doctor, "I shall see that you sleep to-night, or else I shall have another patient on my hands. Afterwards you may take your turn. How much did you sleep last night, young man?"

"Why, not much, I must acknowledge."

"And how much did you eat yesterday?"

Harry smiled, but said nothing.

"Oh, well, I see how it is," continued the doctor, "and if you do not obey me I shall appeal to higher authority."

Harry began to remonstrate, but the doctor turned towards the bed saying, "Mrs. Bradford, I wish you to have a comfortable night if possible. Do you think you can spare Harry to go to bed? He was in the stage last night and lost his rest;—here he is."

Mrs. Bradford turned towards him with eyes full of a mother's love, saying, "Yes, my child, you must, or I shall not be able to rest myself."

So it was decided that Mrs. Allington should watch with Nannie to assist her, and Harry consented to lie

down in his own room adjoining. Mrs. Bradford passed as comfortable a night as her friends could expect. In the morning, when the doctor made his visit, he found Susan and Rose at the bedside of his patient. He led Harry into the portico, to have a consultation, as he said. When out of hearing, he added more seriously.

"The fact is, that everything depends upon keeping your mother perfectly quiet. The least excitement tells upon her pulse. Now I do not like to tax Miss Susan's strength too far, but she is the best nurse we have. It seems to tranquillize your mother to see her about her. You will be here—and—well it may as well be said plainly—Miss Rose is not the sort of nurse for such a case. She does too much. She buzzes about like a humming bird, quite as restless, and far more beautiful; you see too, Harry, that I feel an interest in the successful prosecution of your studies, and must keep an eye to your safety, as well as your mother's."

This was not the first time that Harry had been jested with in this way, and the color deepened a little in his cheek as he replied, "But Rose is very kind and affectionate to my mother. How is the case to be managed?"

"I will undertake for that, and give my directions accordingly."

So the Doctor, Virginia and Harry, arranged the business between them, and some engagement was formed for Rose at home. Col. Hunter came in several times to see his daughter, but otherwise the day passed as quietly as could be desired. Another night of rest, and Mrs. Bradford was pronounced decidedly convalescent.

CHAPTER XII.

AN OLD-FASHIONED STAGE-RIDE.

"Thus in good company,
While summer suns were ripening autumn's fruits,
They journeyed on, enjoying every scene;
But most of all, Humanity—that page
So closely written o'er with thought divine.
A few short hours make fellow travellers, friends.
And in all frankness, many a theme they touched,
Most dear, most sacred."

In a week Mrs. Bradford was well enough to be consigned to the care of the family, and old Letty was most happy to assist Nannie, under the direction of Harry and Willie. Some of her friends came in every day to see her; but Susan, who often remained with her all day, evidently drooped, and could not rally from the fatigue of constant nursing. As Rose was going to visit her sister Jessie in Baltimore, Mrs. Allington proposed that Susan should accompany her and pass a few weeks with Mary. Rose was delighted, and the question now arose, who should be their escort. While they tarried for this important personage to make his appearance, Mrs. Bradford improved so fast that she insisted she was well enough for Harry to make his promised visit to his aunt, Mrs. Rodney. At this arrangement he at first stoutly rebelled, alleging that his mother was still too feeble for him to leave her, but she succeeded in convincing him of the propriety of the plan, and as there were still more

than four weeks before his return to college, he consented to go. Willie gladly resumed his studies and music, which had been necessarily laid aside for several weeks. His health and strength were increasing. The alarming attacks of faintness having passed away, it was now considered safe for him to ride about the neighborhood alone.

As the young travellers were to meet the Woodbury stage at an early hour, it was settled that they should all sleep at the Lodge the previous night. The evening was passed mostly in Mrs. Bradford's room, and might have been a little sad, but for the gaiety of Rose, who was the life of the party, frequently beguiling Col. Hunter from his habitual gravity by her affectionate manners. She had not been in Baltimore since she left school, and was by no means indifferent to the sensation everywhere created by her beauty and showy accomplishments.

"Oh," she exclained, "I long to be there. But only think, Col. Hunter, what a pity that it is not winter instead of summer; there would be so many parties, and concerts and lectures. But I suppose we shall ride about and have pleasure excursions often. Susie, when I come out to Aspen Grove to see you, I shall steal you away from Mary, and take you to town to stay part of the time with me at Jessie's. You'll go, won't you, dear ?"

"Oh, of course I shall want to see Jessie, but you know I am not to be there many weeks. I must be ready to return when father comes for me."

Rose continued to expatiate on the pleasure of her approaching visit till Col. Hunter rose, saying, "Come, my children, we must not keep Sophy up too long. We

will adjourn to the parlor, and have some music to enliven us."

"I am not tired," replied Mrs. Bradford, "and must have at least one of the songs here before you go."

Willie brought the guitar, and they all joined in a lively air that served to brighten the parting kiss. Then putting an arm round each of the girls, Col. Hunter led them off, followed by Willie.

Harry lingered behind, and drawing a low ottoman to the side of his mother's sofa, he said, "Dear mother, I am sure I would rather stay with you than take this journey, if it were right."

"Thank you, my dear boy. My own heart would say the same; but your aunt, who was a watchful mother to me when I lost my own, has surely a right to a few days of your vacation, when she so much desires it. We must consent to a short separation. I am weak now in mind as well as body. You are eighteen years old, and almost as tall as your grandfather, so you must strengthen your mother. The days are fast passing away for you to lean on me as a boy; I shall need to lean on you."

"Oh, do not say so. Let me be a boy as long as I can, and while I thus rest my head on your shoulder, forget how tall I am. You will always be my counsellor and comfort."

"I hope indeed that we shall ever be that to each other, my Harry. I do feel a little sad at the loss of your company, even for so short a time; but it will be only a few days, unless something should transpire to make you wish to prolong your visit. In that case you can be guided by your own judgment, and of course write to let me know. Now good night. You will

come in before you start, as I am always awake at that hour."

A fervent blessing, and a few parting words in the morning, were all that time allowed for Harry with his mother. On the portico stood his grandfather and Willie. "Come, come Harry, my son," said Col. Hunter, "I fear you will be too late. The carriage has been gone some time. It is half way to Woodbury by this time."

"Never fear, Fleetfoot will overtake them. Bring him up, Pete—good bye, good bye; I wish you were going too, little uncle." And springing into the saddle, he was out of sight in a moment.

There had been a fine shower in the night, and all nature was smiling and sparkling in the rays of the rising sun. Fleetfoot seemed resolved to justify his young master's confidence, for he flew over the ground with such speed as to pass the girls in the carriage before they entered the village. The rapid motion, with the exhilarating effect of the mountain air, had revived Harry's spirits. He dashed by them at full speed, and when they drove up they found him on the steps, looking as cool and composed as if he had passed the night there. He came forward to assist them, saying—"Well, young ladies, you are very early. Tom, you must have injured your horses by such fast driving. Did they run away?"

The girls laughed, and Tom replied, "Oh Mars Harry, you so droll! I reckon Mars Davy make me see Georgia when I drive dese horses dat way, and all dese trunks too. Dat horse of yourn, sir, don't go on de ground, he want to fly—s'pose he will soon."

"If he wants to fly, he may when he takes me home again."

"Really, Mr. Bradford, you are very complimentary to your company," said Rose, in a half jesting, half pouting tone, as they entered the house. "Perhaps you had better take your homeward flight now."

"Pardon me, Miss Carter," he rejoined with a bow of ludicrous gravity. "I am only a raw college boy; when you reach Baltimore you will be amply remunerated for your present humiliations. Probably an escort will be sent out to meet you."

Rose laughed, and Harry went out to see that the luggage was safely put on the stage.

"Are you not glad to see Harry in such good spirits, Rose?" said Susan, as they stood by the window looking at him, while he was giving directions about the trunks, and taking leave of Tom. "He was so sad while his mother was sick, it made me sad to see him."

"Yes, he is absolutely gay this morning. There, did you ever see a brighter smile, and all wasted on black Tom. What a shame! and he openly avows his impatience to get through this journey, even in our company."

"But you know, Rosie dear, that Harry does not feel any more ceremony with us, than if we were his sisters. Our neighborhood is almost like one large family. As to the smile, I assure you, Tom is fully able to appreciate the kindness of that, if he does not admire the handsome face as much as you do. I believe those servants would as willingly spend their lives in his service as if he was their master."

"As much as I do! Now, Sue, you would like to have me believe that you do not think Harry is one of the handsomest young men you ever saw. Ah well! you need not turn away to blush, I am answered."

"Dear Rose, of course I know he is handsome, but his goodness is his greatest beauty. He is so devoted to his mother, and scarcely less so to his grandfather and Willie. He never thinks of himself. Oh, he is a noble spirit."

"Really quite eloquent, Susie; and as you are so warm an admirer of handsome gentlemen, I must watch over you very carefully among the beaux of Baltimore."

Susan smiled at the idea of comparing Harry with any of the Baltimore gentlemen she had yet seen, and looking a moment at the brilliant beauty of her friend, said, as she put her arms around her, "I know one who will need more watching than I shall."

Rose Carter had recently finished her education at a celebrated academy. The subject of the comparative merits of home education, and that to be acquired at a large boarding school, had been one of frequent discussion among the ladies of the county. Mrs. Carter was the most eloquent advocate of the latter, and had induced Col. Hunter to send Virginia, with her own Jessie to Bloomington. When Rose was twelve years old, and about to enter that widely celebrated and fashionable institution, both mother and daughter were urgent that Susan Allington should accompany her. But neither Mr. nor Mrs. Allington could be induced to consent. They were ready to acknowledge the advantages of a well regulated institution of that kind, for girls who had no mothers or only such as were either physically, mentally or morally unfitted to superintend the formation of the female character. The daughters of such mothers, they felt, could not be profitable companions, and they shrunk from exposing their young and timid Susan to their influence. The daily scenes and circumstances

of *home* would best prepare her to meet the duties of wife and mother, should she ever be called to perform them, and if not, would certainly not disqualify her for usefulness in single life. Thus judging, all the persuasions of friends were unavailing.

Rare personal loveliness and a disposition naturally sweet and yielding, made Rose the general favorite of teachers and schoolmates, but at the same time, rather tended to retard than promote the acquisition of the more solid parts of education. A quick memory assisted her in passing with tolerable success through the gradation of the classes; but the lesson recited and censure escaped, satisfied her; her mental aspirations rose not beyond the daily task. She thirsted not for deeper draughts of the Pierian spring. But she played with correctness and brilliant execution on both harp and piano, while her graceful and sprightly dancing were as music to the eye.

Susan had seen Rose depart for Bloomington with some tears of regret, which, however, were soon chased away by the endearments of home, together with steady mental and moral discipline in a faithful but unpretending day-school. In music, her natural taste assisted in making her a proficient, and her voice was always ready to aid in the devotions of the family, or to cheer the social circle. Reared by a mother of active and discriminating benevolence, she was early initiated into the sweet charities of life; and wherever there was either sickness or sorrow, Susan was welcome. The touch of her little hand, the low soft tone of her voice, and the beaming kindness of her smile, were like magic. Doctor Torrence had frequent opportunities to test the balmy influence of her ministrations in the sick-room, and

hence his anxiety to detain her at Mrs. Bradford's bedside.

Rose, on the contrary, early separated from home, had unfortunately imbibed a dread of the gloomy accompaniments of sickness. Unsustained by the presence and example of her mother, she trembled to approach the dying bed. If, in less serious cases, real kindness of heart led her to proffer her services, her buoyant spirits and rapid motions kept the patient in continual excitement. Such were the two friends.

The modern plan of being hurled from county to county, and from State to State, at the mercy of a locomotive, is very satisfactory for business purposes, or for some "*lone lorn creter*, who, after months or years of exile from home, burns with impatience to embrace again "wife, children and friends;" to whose yearning heart the wings of the wind would seem lazy steeds—to such a one, steam is a blessed boon, and we heartily rejoice with him in its terrible power. But when a party of friends sets off, in early dewy morning, for a pleasure trip, with good health and buoyant spirits, what can be more exhilarating than an old-fashioned stage-ride among the fine mountain scenery of Virginia? With good company, commodious coach, spirited horses and skillful driver, we speed along the plain or through the woods, whose fragrant branches are no respecters of persons, but often give a familiar slap in the face, leaving a shower of bright drops as a remembrance; while we inhale the spicy breath of penny royal or life everlasting, as they are crushed beneath the wheels. Now we slowly ascend the mountain side, taking breath to exclaim on the beauty of the country, the luxuriance of the wheat-fields, or the taste and amplitude of the country

seats as they look out from time to time among the trees. Then pause on the breezy summit, and survey the widely extended smiling valley at our feet, with its silver stream winding gracefully through it—to catch the soft notes of the horn as the return stage comes toiling up from below, to send the admiring gaze to the far-off, blue, shadowy outline of the Alleghanies. Again the almost frightful dash down the descent on the other side, plunging us in a few moments from the wildness of nature into the bosom of some little town, where our arrival makes an era in the daily life of the inhabitants, especially of the dogs, that throw themselves into an agony of barking, but without making a sound audible amid the din of the vehicle rumbling through the streets. This is pleasure travelling as it still exists in some places, and such was the journey of our young friends on the present occasion.

It was the season when most of the travel is away from the cities to the springs and the sea-shore, consequently they had the stage most of the time to themselves, occasionally taking up odd or quaint passengers in one little village and depositing them in another. This page of human nature they enjoyed very much, and when near the end of their journey, they stopped at the entrance to an avenue, leading to a house almost concealed in a fine grove. As they sat watching and wondering who was to be their company, they saw several persons come out into a long piazza, and then there was a general shaking of hands with some kissing, and the lively sound of young voices was borne to their ears as two young men turned away and came down the walk towards the stage.

"How vexatious!" whispered Susan to her compan-

ion, "now all our pleasant sociability is at an end, and we must retire behind dignity and reserve."

"Vexatious indeed!" responded Rose, narrowly inspecting the young men as they advanced. "But, Sue, they are gentlemen, that is evident, and one of them is quite handsome. Do look! I believe Harry knows them; he has gone through the gate."

They watched with interest the friendly greeting that followed the recognition of Harry, who, when they took their seats, introduced them as Mr. Forrester, a classmate at Carlisle, and his friend Mr. Huntingdon. With the latter he had no acquaintance, but it was pleasant to renew with Mr. Forrester, the remembrance of college life. Both were going to Baltimore, and expressed much pleasure in meeting agreeable company.

The ride lost none of its charms to Rose, who was an object of undisguised admiration to her new acquaintances. They kept up a lively conversation, in which Harry sometimes joined. Susan soon wearied of the gay trifling, and dropping her veil, remarked that it was becoming quite dusty.

"Yes," replied Forrester, "but we shall soon have rain."

All involuntarily cast a glance at the clouds, which certainly gave no intimation of showers.

"Not by the appearance of the clouds," he replied, laughing; "but there are camp-meetings all around us, and they always bring rain."

"I suppose they do," said Rose; "but I do not know much about it."

"Have you never seen an encampment?" asked Huntingdon.

"Only once," was the answer, "and then only for an hour or two; Susan often goes, I believe."

"Indeed, Miss Allington," said Forrester, "that surprises me. They are very disorderly places."

"In what respect?" quietly asked Susan.

"Why so many go merely for sport; and on the outskirts they cannot prevent the sale of intoxicating liquors. I have heard of great riots at camp-meetings."

"I am aware that it has been so in some places, but may not the accounts be exaggerated? Those very persons, too, that created the disturbance would have been equally unruly somewhere if they had not been at camp-meeting; besides, it is well known that many such have been induced to come into the congregation, and through the influence of the preaching, brought to repentance. I believe it is estimated that the amount of disorder is not greater in proportion to the numbers assembled, than in other circumstances. In Virginia the laws of the State protect them, and so strict are the rules, so efficient the officers, that any rude or disorderly persons are immediately taken from the ground and put in confinement. I have been so happy as never to have experienced any annoyance of that kind."

"But how can you be shielded from the weather? It is always sure to rain."

"Not always; but a shower is always welcome, for the constant motion of such a multitude of feet causes a great deal of dust."

"Still you must get wet."

"There is no necessity for it. Some persons, to be sure, who would not take care of their health upon any occasion, will go to camp-meeting with only what are called fair weather tents. They either suffer or are a

burden on the hospitality of their more provident friends. But when the tent is, as it can easily be, waterproof or protected by a fly, it is perfectly comfortable.

"But yet I do not see the use of leaving one's comfortable pew in church, and going out into the woods to hear sermons."

Susan felt that he was not prepared to understand the benefit of thus turning aside from "the dwellings of careworn men," to commune with nature's God in his own magnificent temple of woods, so she was glad that Harry took up the subject.

"Many think," he remarked, "that in the neighborhood of large cities, it would be better to dispense with them, but in our frontier States, where churches and ministers are rare, they must still be productive of great good."

"Oh come, Bradford," said Forrester, "I always suspected you of being a Methodist; I begin to think I was right. How is it?" And the question was accompanied by a scarcely perceptible sneer.

"I am not a Methodist by membership," was Harry's modest but firm reply; "but I certainly am one in principle and affection."

This grave and manly answer checked the spirit of levity which was beginning to pervade the conversation, and Forrester, thinking it best to say no more, turned to Huntingdon, who was by this time completely entranced by the spell of Rose's beauty and fascination. The conversation turned upon indifferent subjects and they soon reached the city.

The young gentlemen were left at the hotel, after carefully informing themselves where Harry was to be found, and assuring him that they should call upon him

very soon; at which Harry laughed heartily, remarking, as soon as they were out of hearing, that he could easily understand their motives—not wholly disinterested, he feared.

Susan was to remain with Rose in town during the night, and in the morning go out to the house of her brother-in-law, Mr. Austen, a few miles in the country. They were safely landed at the door of Mr. Munroe, and Harry, promising to see them again soon, took leave to seek the dwelling of his aunt.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GUARDIAN OF THE FAMILY HONORS.

"In sooth she was a stately dame,
Of courtly mien and high degree,
More reckoned she of blood and name,
Than many a royal dynasty.
And that the banner floating free,
Above her native towers might be
Forever pure from blot or stain,
Oft sorely tasked her busy brain."

Mrs. Rodney was some years younger than Col. Hunter, and possessed much of the vivacity and energy that once characterized him. A genuine Virginia lady, she was hospitable, warm-hearted, simple in her taste and habits, wearing easily the externals of wealth and station, but without seeming to value herself upon them. She was beloved and honored by all for her noble qualities, and, if the sacred points of *name*, *descent*, and *church* were not infringed, under the controlling influence of high religious principle and practice. These cabalistic words, to her dismay, had been lightly regarded by her niece Sophy Hunter, a daughter of the Hunters of Hunter's Lodge—one who had been for some years trained under her own eye, to the best of her ability, in the time-honored paths. And yet this rebellious niece had married an unknown adventurer, from another State, professing another faith as it seemed to her. She had even adopted that faith herself, and still adhered to it, though

she had been received again into the bosom of her family. That there was the remotest probability of her brother being led astray by these errors never entered Mrs. Rodney's mind.

She mourned with Col. Hunter over Willie's feeble health, while his amiable character won her love. Again and again she compared his fragile form and spiritual beauty of countenance with Harry's vigorous frame and noble, manly features, thinking if the latter could only be transferred to one bearing the family name she should be satisfied. Alas! it could not be. In the event of Willie's death, she could not but regard Harry Bradford as the last hope of the family, and it had long been her absorbing desire to see him removed from Methodist influence, induced to change his name, and married to some one of her own choosing.

With sanguine hopes of accomplishing these favorite objects, she had visited her paternal home, soon after the recall of her niece, and although she met her with the resentful feeling that by her marriage she had cast a reproach upon the name of Hunter, that state of mind could not long bear sway against the mingled dignity and Christian sweetness surrounding Mrs. Bradford like a halo. With her brother she could accomplish much less than she anticipated, on account of the despondency and apathy that shrouded his mind in gloom.

She talked as freely on these delicate points as she dared with Mrs. Bradford, and found her, as usual, willing to make any sacrifice of her personal prepossessions that did not violate her conscience. She was even willing, as has been before remarked, to make the Episcopal church her own, if by so doing she could be the means of restoring happiness to her beloved father. But here

the path was providentially closed, for the present rector of the Parish being of the high church party, and so extreme in his views that Mrs. Rodney herself did not wish to hear him.

Could she only gain his mother's consent, she would adopt Harry and have him educated to suit herself. But here she found the mother firm. Not only the depth of her maternal tenderness, but her high sense of responsibility sustained her against such an arrangement. She considered her child as a sacred trust placed in her hands by God, to be required of her only, if he was not formed and trained to make such an impress on the world around him as would redound to the glory of God and the salvation of the human race. Though she trembled in view of a trust so momentous being placed in a grasp so feeble, yet, in humble reliance on divine aid, she dared not resign it to another.

Under these circumstances, Harry's visit to his aunt Rodney was a source of mingled pleasure and vexation to her. She was delighted with his evident improvement in mind and person, which only increased her chagrin that he was not a genuine Hunter. She talked with him about his studies and various things connected with the college, expressing her views as clearly as she deemed prudent respecting Methodism, to all of which he replied with great gentleness and forbearance. When her remarks bore even remotely upon the course of his mother, he was silent, but she saw by his heightened color and compressed lips that it was a subject not safely to be touched. Once she ventured so far as to rouse the dormant fire. With kindling eye, but in respectful terms, he assured her that the subject must never again be mentioned. With a burst of filial tenderness he

spoke of his father and mother in such a strain of eloquence as completely to silence his aunt, and inspire her with a degree of respect and admiration for his manliness, that again called forth her bitter regret that he was not a Hunter.

She took him to the Episcopal church, and here her hopes gained the ascendency, for he seemed to enter with so much seriousness into the solemn services, that she knew he appreciated their beauty and fitness. Quite elated, she inquired how he liked the sermon, and was again delighted by his unqualified approbation.

Glad to find that Rose Carter had come to Baltimore with him, her busy imagination, prompted by her wishes, immediately saw an attachment springing up between them which would materially aid her plans. Rose was her god-daughter, which increased the desire she felt in common with her brother to unite the two families. She often invited her to the house, and wherever they went, Harry must be Rose's escort, while her beauty, grace and accomplishments were her constant theme.

As the time drew near for Harry to leave Baltimore, her impatience could be controlled no longer, and she repeatedly alluded in a jesting way to what she chose to consider the growing affection between them. Harry bore these hints, which he perfectly understood, for some time, parrying them with sportive answers; but perceiving that they were becoming rather more serious than he liked, on one occasion, when her insinuations were too pointed to be misunderstood, he sat down by his aunt, and as he looked in her face his lips formed the imperfect motion that indicated an intended speech. She waited a moment, but as he continued silently looking at her, she asked him what he was going to say.

"I was going to say something—I"——

"What is it, Harry?"

"Do you think I had better fall in love with Rose before I enter my junior year in college?"

There was something so direct, so simple in this query, that the lady was completely taken by surprise. She could not be sure whether he was in jest or earnest, and for a moment was at a loss for an answer. As soon as she recovered her self-possession, she replied with a smile.

"Such things frequently occur, Harry; and although I am not prepared to justify such a course in every case, yet there may be peculiar circumstances that would make it proper."

"And do you consider mine one of those cases?"

"Perhaps it may be. You are aware of the great desire existing to unite the two families."

"Why, Aunt Rodney," exclaimed Harry, no longer able to preserve his gravity, "you quite surprise me. A lady of your excellent judgment to expose a poor simple country boy like me to such danger."

"Do you really find it dangerous, Harry?" she asked, while a droll expression of earnestness mingled with an embarrassed consciousness that this simple country boy understood her plans.

"Not so much so, but that I find myself heart whole as yet, which is a remarkable fact considering my advanced age. Do you not think so?"

"Oh, Harry! But jesting apart, many persons think it no disadvantage for a young man to form an attachment of that kind at an early age."

"That may be; but as you say—jesting apart, I have been led to believe that marriages made up in that way

by families, before the parties most interested have any real knowledge of each other, and consequently any true affection, rarely result in happiness. I certainly have no intention to entangle myself with anything of the kind at present. When I get through college and decide upon a profession, it will be time enough. So I will thank you, dear aunt, to say no more about it. In the meantime, Rose, and Susan too, are like sisters to me, and I should be very sorry that either of them should suspect me of so absurd an idea."

"I presume there can be no danger of that on the part of Susan. She seems, to be sure, a very nice little girl, but very young, and rather commonplace. Mrs. Allington is an excellent woman, but of her family I really have never taken pains to inform myself."

Disregarding the latter part of his aunt's observation, Harry replied: "Aunt Rodney, you do not know Susan. You have scarcely seen her since she was a child, and I hope you will cultivate her acquaintance while she is with Mrs. Austen. You will find her more mature in mind than Rose. She has been educated at home, and is both intelligent and amiable."

The subject of Harry's attachment to Rose was wisely dropped during the remainder of his visit.

A few days before Harry's proposed return home, he called at the house of Mr. Munroe, to inform Jessie and Rose that he was going out to Mr. Austen's to say "good bye," and if they had any message he would be the bearer. Rose replied that she had been thinking of going herself in the afternoon, and willingly accepted Harry's proposal to go with him. It must be confessed she was not quite so insensible to Harry's attractions, as his modesty led him to suppose. She was clear-sighted

enough to perceive that he bore a very favorable comparison, not only in person, but in true nobility of character, with the crowd of triflers who bowed before her beauty, and while they gratified her self-love by their warm manifestations of devotion, she thought she would like to see Harry among them. She valued his frank, boyish kindness, but without fully understanding it herself, it did not satisfy her. She missed the homage to which she was becoming accustomed from all who approached her.

On reaching Aspen Grove, they found the household in some confusion, on account of high preparations for going to camp-meeting. Mrs. Austen was to have a tent, and cordially invited her young friends to be her guests. Rose pleaded numerous engagements, but Harry owned that it was just what he should like of all things, only that his allotted time was about expiring, and he thought he must return home. He felt anxious lest his mother might not be as well.

"But she is much better," said Mrs. Austen, "for we received a letter yesterday, and mother says she is gaining strength every day."

"She told me when I came away," pursued Harry, as if reasoning the case with himself, "that if anything occurred to make me wish to prolong my stay, not to hurry home. I have never seen a camp-meeting since I can remember, and I know she wishes me to go when I have a good opportunity. Susie, I can depend upon your judgment—do you think I ought to go?"

The color flashed into Susan's cheek at this compliment, but after a momentary hesitation, she smilingly answered, "Perhaps our wishes may warp our judgment Harry, and I would not like to persuade you against

yours; but I have no doubt that your mother, if she were here, would urge your going."

Harry thought awhile, and asked various questions as to the time of starting, the place and mode of getting there; all of which were answered so satisfactorily, that he promised to send them his decision when Mr. Austen came out in the evening.

Before reaching the city, Harry had made up his mind to go to camp-meeting, but how Mrs. Rodney would receive the announcement of it was by no means doubtful. With the utmost respect for her, he did not feel bound to yield to her prejudices, and he entered her sitting-room, half amused and half reluctant to meet her comments on what she would consider a step entirely subversive of her plans.

"Well, my dear child," she said, as she laid aside her book to greet his entrance, "I am glad you are returned so soon. Did you not find it very warm?"

"Not as much so as I expected. There is a fine breeze, and we had shade much of the way."

"Who went with you, my dear?"

"Rose was going out to-day, and I offered to drive her," he replied with great coolness.

The good lady made no audible comment on this piece of information, but the evident complacency with which it was received was not lost on her shrewd nephew.

"I suppose you took leave of your friends?"

"No, ma'am; I believe I shall change my plans."

"Ah, that is right; you will stay some days longer?" And as she laid her hand on his shoulder, she did not attempt to disguise the pleasure she felt.

"Thank you, my dear aunt, for your kindness, and I hope you will not think me ungrateful, when I tell you

that I am going with Mrs. Austen to the camp-meeting."

The hand was instantly withdrawn, and for a moment displeasure burned in her cheek. "I am very sorry to hear it, Harry. I must acknowledge, I had hoped better things of your good sense. But," she added, softening her tone, "if you are really resolved to sanction such disorderly proceedings as I am informed frequently occur at those places, I trust that by witnessing them, you will be convinced of their impropriety."

"I wish it were possible for me to please you in all things," he returned, affectionately taking her hand, "and if you so greatly desire it, I will give up my plan; but I fear you will never make anything satisfactory of me. I was born a Methodist, and spoiled for anything else. But do not vex your kind heart about me, I will try to be a good boy and not oppose your wishes in every point."

This was said with so much sweetness, that the good lady was completely overcome. She covered her face and wept. Harry did and said all that he could to soothe her, and she soon recovered enough to say,

"Oh, Harry! you cannot understand how important you are to us. You have been brought up so differently —but you must be aware how very uncertain it is whether dear Willie ever lives to be a man, and if he should die, the estate must come into your possession. We cannot but feel the greatest solicitude in regard to your future course and character.

"I will certainly try not to disappoint your reasonable expectations," replied Harry, with grave earnestness; "but you forget how much Willie is improved. He is everything that is excellent, and will live, I ardently

hope, to be the delight of your old age, as master of Hunter's Lodge."

"I am sure I hope it may be so; and at any rate, Harry, you will make me love you, though you are so willful."

Harry laughed, saying, "But I will not be willful; I will send word to Mrs. Austen that I decide not to go with her, if you desire it."

"No, my child, I cannot allow that. If your heart is there it will do no good, and if you do not go now I suppose you will some other time."

"I cannot promise that I will not; but I am not willing to leave you displeased with me."

"I am not displeased with you, my dear Harry; I believe I tried to be, but you will not let me." And she sealed the reconciliation with a kiss.

Harry went to Mr. Austen's office, to say that he might tell Mrs. Austen he would be with them in time to go out to the camp-ground.

CHAPTER XIV.

GOING TO CAMP-MEETING.

"On yonder hill, with oak and hickory crowned,
What sight is that which draws, from far and near,
The thronging people up the dusty roads,
And through each field, where'er a by-path leads?"
"There arrives
The apostle-pilgrim, punctual to the hour,
Mounts the rough desk, and lifts his trembling tones."

T. BUCHANAN READ.

As the party were to start very early in the morning, Harry took leave of Mrs. Rodney the previous evening, not intending to return to town, and went out to Aspen Grove with Mr. Austen. He was much amused and interested to observe the numerous baskets and packages that were in the carriage, all to contribute to their general comfort at camp-meeting.

When they arrived, they found the large wagon loaded, ready to start during the night, with the tent, furniture, and provisions for a week's sojourn in the wilderness. The servants were evidently in as great excitement of anticipated enjoyment as any part of the family. Several of them were going out with the wagon, to put up the tent and arrange the furniture, as well as to perform the usual services after the arrival of the family. Mr. Austen was to leave home by break of day, on horseback, to have all attended to for the comfort of his family and guests, before their arrival. On account of his

business he could not stay all the time, but promised to be with them as much as possible.

After an early breakfast, the carriage was at the door, and Mrs. Austen, Susan, and the baby, Marion, were seated in it. Then the various baskets, packages, etc., brought from town, with many more, were carefully bestowed, and just as Harry was taking his seat as driver, Mrs. Austen cried out, "Oh! where is the looking-glass?" This caused some mirth, but the important article being brought, and committed to the special care of Susan, they drove off.

The morning was warm and somewhat dusty, but all being in fine spirits, trifling inconveniences were disregarded. Mrs. Austen regretted, on Harry's account, that they would probably find everything in confusion on their arrival; but he told her not to be troubled about that, for as he was a novice in such scenes, he preferred to see all its different phases.

"But how does it happen," she inquired, "that you have never seen a camp-meeting?"

"I believe my parents did once take me with them when I was very young—so young that I have no recollection of it. After that, my mother's health was delicate, she was not able to bear the fatigue of taking us all, and not willing to leave any behind. Since we have been in Virginia, her first object has been to promote the comfort of my grandfather and Willie."

They journeyed on till within a few miles of the ground, when they passed several houses where the family and servants were loading their wagons, as they stood before the door, with beds, tables, chairs, boxes, etc.

"Why," exclaimed Harry, "I should think this was the first of May, in New York! Everybody seems to

be moving, and there is another wagon-load going up the hill just before us."

Mrs. Austen and Susan laughed heartily at this simplicity, and asked him if he supposed they were the only persons going to camp-meeting. He joined in the laugh, saying, that he should soon understand all the indications of the great gathering.

As they drew nearer, the crowd increased, of wagons, carriages and carts of all conceivable forms and sizes, carrying every variety of persons, from the most genteel to the most grotesque. Some rode on horseback, males and females, some single, some double, but all alike, with their faces set towards the grand centre of interest. Frequently they met empty return vehicles, and before proceeding far, they were greeted by columns of smoke, curling among the trees, and the sound of axes and hammers, used in the erection of these sylvan tabernacles. They entered the woods in the direction indicated by the current.

All was new and interesting to Harry; but little was said as they threaded their way among the vehicles, horses and people, hurrying to and fro, preparing their temporary homes. Soon Mrs. Austen found somebody that could direct them to the spot selected for her tent, and where Mr. Austen met them. The carriage was unloaded, and the horses taken to the place assigned for them by the servants, who had so well performed their part, that the tent was not only up, but the carpets laid and the furniture mostly in its place. The baby was consigned to its nurse, while Mrs. Austen and Susan superintended the completion of the arrangements.

Harry was ordered to feel himself entirely at liberty

to look round and enjoy the novelty of the scene. Accordingly, he walked about and took a general survey of the ground. It was situated in a grove of magnificent trees, mostly oaks, cleared of underbrush, and on the gentle slope of a hill, that the water might run off, should they be favored with showers. The space encircled by the lines of tents was large and finely shaded. The stand, as the rustic pulpit is called, was roomy enough to seat twenty preachers, if so many should assemble, and in front was the commodious space inclosed for the altar.

Harry was deeply interested in watching the tents in the various stages of being erected and made comfortable. Some were as entirely settled as if they had been there a week, and the inmates conversing with dear friends, from whom they had been long separated. His heart responded to the joy that sparkled in every eye. Some were just surrounding the table for the noon meal, with the quiet enjoyment of home; others, less advanced in their work, were putting up their tents, while the children and dogs seemed to vie with each other in an overflowing joyousness as they frolicked about the seats prepared for the congregation.

Harry loved to study human character in all its aspects, and this panorama of domestic scenes possessed a charm more like that of a dream than actual life. The perfect simplicity with which each little family circle stood unveiled before him was novel in the extreme. The gay seekers of pleasure, the thoughtless lovers of excitement, were not yet there; but you might see the aged fathers and mothers, resting in their own comfortable chairs, and waiting quietly the commencement of those services for which they thirsted. The air of patriarchal simplicity, the apostolic greetings of these aged

saints, the fervent blessings invoked upon their descendants, as one after another they gathered around them from their distant homes, stirred the very depths of Harry's soul. Tears suffused his eyes, and he longed to present himself among them, saying, "Bless me, even me, also, oh my father!"

He tried to analyze his feelings, but they were too new; the circumstances were so unlike any with which he was familiar, that he was in a state of bewilderment, and "pleasure excessive seemed turning to pain." When a servant came to call him to dinner, he was like one suddenly aroused from sleep. He arose and followed his guide, however, feeling that it was a relief to his full heart to change the scene to one of less absorbing interest.

Susan stepped out from the curtains to meet him, saying, "Why, Harry, I have been watching you for some time, as you sat leaning against that tree, and almost thought you were asleep."

"No, Susie, I was not asleep; but it seems as if I had been dreaming."

As she looked at him, her light-hearted reply was checked by the solemn earnestness of the eyes bent upon her, and she silently led the way to the part of the tent where a hasty and informal meal was prepared. He partook slightly of it, and returning to the front of the tent, sat down to resume his dreamy meditations. They were rather dispersed by the presence of others passing in and out, talking and laughing. Susan drew near him while she watched the gambols of her little niece on the carpet, and he asked her—

"How is it, Susie, that everybody seems in such fine spirits, and I feel so differently?"

"I scarcely know," she answered, "unless it is that the newness of the scene, and the prominent idea of worship, impresses you. Others, I fear, come here with mixed views. Devotion, of course, is the principal one; but to many the change from the city to the pure air of the country is exhilarating. Then, the meeting of so many friends, and the ludicrous scenes and occurrences keep us in a pleasurable state of excitement much of the first part of the time; but this soon passes away, and gives place to the more serious objects of the meeting."

Harry gave her one of his bright smiles, and said he thought she had made her point very clear. Just then he started up and exclaimed, "There's Mr. Preston," and springing over the benches, he was at his side in a moment. Susan was an interested spectator of the cordial greeting between Mr. Preston and his young friend. He held his hand conversing in an animated manner for a short time, then putting his arm over his shoulder, drew him into the tent near which they were standing. He introduced him to several persons, and they all seated themselves for a comfortable talk. As Susan stood looking at them, the question arose in her artless mind, "What is the reason that anything concerning Harry is so much more interesting to me than if it were any other young man?" But she soon satisfied herself that it was because she had known him so long, and that he was so different from others. Everybody loved Harry, and it would be very strange if she did not see that he was good. So the simple-hearted little girl of sixteen summers reasoned the case out to her own satisfaction, and when her sister joined her, her heart had resumed its usual quiet motions. Mrs. Austen asked her what attracted her attention so closely on the other side of the

ground, and she replied without embarrassment that Harry had found Mr. Preston, and pointed them out to her.

"Dear Harry!" said Mrs. Austen, "I hope he will find this meeting a blessing."

"But, Mary, do you not think he is a Christian?"

"I hope he is, dear; but he does not seem to have the experience that satisfies him. When any one has been so faithfully trained as he has been, it is difficult to decide. I want to see him in the enjoyment of such an assurance of his acceptance in the Beloved, as shall throw his remarkable gifts and strong energetic character into the great work of extending the Redeemer's kingdom."

Susan acquiesced, but was silent.

Mr. Preston soon came to see his other children, as he affectionately denominated the sisters, and willingly accepted an invitation to tea. By this time, the little household was neatly and comfortably arranged, and they all enjoyed, at the amply supplied table, a reminiscence of "*auld lang syne.*" When they returned to the front part of the tent, after the repast, Susan remarked that she could almost wish the whole meeting could be as quiet and comfortable as it then was.

"Yes, my child," returned Mr. Preston, "if there were none but Christian tent-holders and their families on the ground, we might enjoy a little heaven upon earth. But that would defeat one of the principal objects of our assembling. We must not eat our morsel alone, and among the crowds that will throng these walks and seats to-morrow, how many there may be, led here by various motives not to be too closely scanned, who will find more than they came to seek, even 'the pearl

of great price.' Have you no friends, sister Susie, that you would like to see brought from darkness to light in this beautiful grove?"

Susan's eyes met the kindling glance of Harry and she knew that she answered for both when she said with fervor, "Oh, yes, we all wish dear Rose was here."

"That is Miss Carter, is it not? But why Rose more particularly than others? is she a very important personage to any of my friends?" And he turned to Harry, who did remember Mrs. Rodney's hints enough to blush a little, but he answered promptly and with composure the smiling query:

"Rose is of great importance to us all. We have grown up together, almost like brother and sisters. But I suppose Susan's fears are awakened on her account because she has so much to draw her to the pleasures of the world."

"Indeed, she has!" rejoined Susan; "her beauty and amiable disposition make everybody love her and praise her, so that she cannot realize the unsatisfactory nature of her pleasures, and desires no better portion."

"Well then, Susan, you must show her the light of a holy example, and pray that she may seek to secure a better portion; 'even a heavenly.' Now if you will close the curtains, we will have worship." After reading a chapter of scripture, they joined in singing a hymn, and the evening prayer was offered up.

When Mr. Preston took leave, the ladies busied themselves about the sleeping accommodations, that they might listen without hurry or distraction of mind to the first sermon.

Harry, again left to his own resources, wandered off to the outer circle of tents. There he was much amused

with the various culinary establishments pertaining to each little home. Most of them were shut in by hedges, formed of branches of trees. In some, the fires were nearly extinguished, but in others, the kettles, hung on cross-sticks, were boiling and steaming, while the aroma of coffee and broiling ham filled the air. But "the grand old woods," by which he was surrounded, were more inviting, and he soon retreated to their shelter from the rays of the descending sun. Here he enjoyed an uninterrupted hour, that well prepared him for the public services.

He sat upon a fallen tree, absorbed in thought, till, as—

> "The shades of eve came slowly down,
> The woods were wrapped in deeper brown."

Thus warned of the lapse of time, he rose and retraced his steps towards the camp. He found the ground partially lighted, and the congregation gathering to their places. Seeing many persons taking seats in the altar, he followed and found a place among them. Indeed, there were so few yet on the ground, and a part even of the few still engaged in preparing their tents, that the numbers within this little inclosure seemed to exceed those without. The lights were barely sufficient to reclaim a small space from the surrounding gloom. Two or three preachers only were on the stand.

Presently, Harry thought he recognized the same venerable face, adorned by its snowy locks, that had most interested him in his first survey of the ground. The old man approached the stand, and instantly ready hands were extended to assist his tottering steps as he ascended to his place. Whispers from one to another gave Harry the information he desired.

"That's Father Wilmot. He's just returned from a missionary expedition among the Indians."

"Is it? Well, I have often heard of him, but never saw him before."

"I am afraid nobody will see him long in this world; his work is almost done, I should say."

"He looks very old."

"Yes, older than he really is, though he can't be far from seventy. He has had a hard life of it. I hope he will tell us some of his experience to-night, for I hear he leaves in the morning."

The conversation proceeded no farther, for the exercises commenced, and Harry listened with breathless emotion while

> "They shook the depths of the desert's gloom,
> With their hymns of lofty cheer."

He could not sing with them. He wondered at himself. Why this unusual tenderness of heart? Was it really the softening influences of the Spirit? He dared scarcely believe it, but was glad to find it even increased, when after a prayer and another hymn, the aged missionary addressed the audience; selecting the words, "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shall find it after many days." He spoke of the wide sea of the far West, where many souls were perishing for lack of knowledge; illustrating the truth of his words by various anecdotes of his experiences among the sons of the forest as well as the scattered white settlers. He alluded to the improbability of his being able to return again to the field of his labors, and exhorted his younger brethren to be ready to supply his place.

The wildness of the scene, together with the quaint

simplicity of garb and language that marked the aged speaker were not without their effect upon his hearers, and when the little congregation was dismissed, it was with reluctance that Harry rose and bent his steps towards the tent.

As he drew near, he found the curtains in front closed, though there were lights within, and in a little uncertainty he stood waiting on the outside, till Mrs. Austen and Susan came up, and asked him, laughing, if he was waiting for a key to unlock the door. They all entered together, and the air of comfort was striking even in the rude arrangements of camp life. His bed was prepared for him in the front part of the tent, where there were several others, still lying around the sides of the apartment as they had been during the day, neatly rolled up and confined by leather straps, so as to be used for seats if needful. His was outspread on the carpet, the snowy sheets and pillows wearing a most inviting aspect.

Harry looked about him in pleased surprise at the novelty as well as comfort of the arrangement. Mrs. Austen smiled and said that as he was a novice, he should see the other rooms in her house. Drawing aside the curtain, she showed him that the rear of the tent was divided by a narrow passage through the centre, with sleeping rooms on each side. The passage led to another tent which was the dining-room. In one of the comfortable beds lay the little Marion in all the beauty of sleeping infancy. After admiring the neatness and comfort of these arrangements, Harry bent over the little placid face and pressing his lips to the rosy cheek, returned to his own room.

He did not find sleep quite as ready to receive him as he anticipated, for the new and strange scenes that had

passed before his eyes during the day still haunted the chambers of his imagination. The busy little community had not yet ceased its labor, and the voices of men with the strokes of the hammer were still heard in different directions. The footsteps and even the words of the passers-by were so distinct, that he repeatedly started from his pillow, supposing they were within his curtained room.

Yet all was pleasant and soothing to his young mind, and when the sweet words of a hymn, sung by several voices, rose from the next tent, they fell upon his ear like enchantment, and he listened till the notes and his thoughts blended in dreamy confusion, and he fell asleep.

Still his excited mind was busy, and he seemed to walk again in the twilight of the woods, but Rose was now his companion. He tried to impress her with the importance of the solemn subjects which filled his own mind; but with the usual impotence of dreaming efforts, the words died on his palsied tongue; while gay and sparkling like herself, she laughed and sported by his side. As they glided on, Mrs. Rodney suddenly appeared before them, and taking their hands in hers, tried to join them. But a visionary form, bearing a mingled resemblance to his mother and Susan, floated between them, and he started up wide awake.

It was some moments before he could remember where he was. All was silent and dark, save that the moonlight cast delicately traced shadows of branch and leaf, gently swaying in the wind, on the white cloth of the tent above his head. Vexed and ashamed that his aunt Rodney's wild speculations should have returned to his mind even in a dream, he lay down, and resolving to keep awake till he had schooled himself into a more national mood, he fell asleep.

CHAPTER XV.

A TROUBLED MIND.

"See, where the red and new arisen sun
Points his bright finger through the upland grove,
Flushing the white tents to a rosy hue.
And hark, the call of the resounding horn,
Which echo from yon hill with slumberous shell
Blows softly back! Are these the tents of war?
* * * * * * *
It is the camp of that increasing strife,
Waged 'gainst a world of sin; it is a host
Come out upon the glorious side of Truth,
To fight, to suffer, and with love to conquer."

T. Buchanan Read.

Long and peacefully Harry now slept, till, aroused by the morning horn, he again unclosed his eyes. The beautiful shadows, so gracefully painted on the canvas, had given place to the imperfect light of dawn. As soon as he was dressed he stepped out and walked around the circle. The tents were closed and silent; but before he had passed entirely round, the voice of prayer and praise was heard ascending from one after another, and he lingered to catch the sacred words.

When he reached his own home he found all traces of a sleeping-apartment removed, and the little family assembled with Mr. Preston, who had promised to conduct the morning devotions. After breakfast, Harry was going to take a walk, but Mrs. Austen called to him and cautioned him not to stay too long, for the eight o'clock prayer-meeting was the best part of the day. He asked

a few questions about it, and promising to return in time, turned off.

He had not gone far before he gained a hill that commanded the principal approach to the encampment. Here he paused in mute astonishment to see the multitude of vehicles, horses and pedestrians, all pressing on to the meeting. Two gentlemen caught his attention as they drew near, and he was delighted to recognize Mr. Selden as one of them. He hastened to him and found the pleasure of meeting was mutual. Mr. Selden introduced him to his friend Mr. Foster, and after seeing the horses cared for, they all repaired to the preachers' tent, where they found Mr. Preston and many others. Some had known his father and seemed glad to recall him in the lineaments of the son. All were cordial and friendly, telling him that he must feel himself at home among them.

The prayer-meeting was all that Mrs. Austen had represented it. Mr. Foster read a hymn, which all sung together, and then prayed most fervently for a blessing upon the services of the day. Mr. Preston read a chapter, remarking on the various parts, and enforcing its solemn truths as he proceeded. Several other hymns were sung and prayers offered, all of which sank deep into Harry's heart.

On his return to the tent he found the walks thronged with people who had recently arrived, and a number of Mrs. Austen's friends were in the tent. Among them was Mrs. Preston. She received him with almost maternal affection, making many inquiries about his mother and other friends. He sat talking with her and others till the horn sounded for morning preaching.

The day passed off less solemnly and pleasantly than

the preceding. Mrs. Austen's tent was on the gentlemen's side of the congregation, which made it more convenient for her and her guests to take chairs and sit near enough to listen with comfort. Harry seated himself beside Mrs. Preston, but the constant interruptions from persons coming into the congregation, the talking, and even laughing, deprived him of much of his enjoyment, and he began to think with Susan, that he should like camp-meeting much better if there was not such a crowd of people, seeking only the enjoyment of the hour. He feared the benefit he had hoped to derive from the occasion was lost. The sermon he knew was excellent, but his attention was so continually drawn off and his indignation excited by the very irreverent demeanor of persons around him, that he returned to the tent displeased with himself as well as others.

Moody and discontented, he sat apart till he saw Susan coming up from the altar. He went out to meet her, saying: "Where have you been, Susan, I lost sight of you entirely?"

"And I wondered where you were, Harry. I sat in the altar; I always do when I can, and you would find it more agreeable; there is so much confusion outside."

"I should prefer to sit there very much, if I could, but it seemed so crowded that I thought I should be considered an intruder."

They entered the tent together, but the gay conversation of the company was so opposed to the feeling of solemnity that had pervaded Harry's whole soul the day before, as well as to his present vexation, that he fled from the uncongenial atmosphere, taking refuge in the back tent, where Mrs. Austen was directing the servants in preparing the table. She was too busy to take much

notice of him, but he amused himself with the endearing smiles and caresses of the little fair Marion till dinner was ready.

With delicate womanly tact, Susan seemed to feel his uncomfortable state of mind, and came towards him as he stood near the tent, irresolute how to occupy the time till afternoon preaching. Looking in his face, while a slight flitting color passed over her fair cheek, she said,

"Come, Harry, you are a stranger, and do not know how to dispose of your time between the services. But you will soon learn. In the meantime, will you put yourself under my direction?"

His own peculiarly attractive smile chased the shadow from his brow as he answered: "That is just what I should like, Susie."

Again the color was there and gone, as saying, "Come with me, then," she led the way around the circle. Presently she turned through a narrow passage, and then another, till she paused before a large tent that had already been pointed out to Harry as belonging to a company from a neighboring town. Here the interior was not furnished like that of the family tents, but only with benches, the ground being covered with clean straw. The seats were nearly all filled, and many idlers were hanging about the entrance, both front and back. Some one was engaged in prayer at the time, and they paused to listen. As soon as the voice ceased, Susan motioned her companion to follow, and glided in. Seats were offered them, and they joined in singing the hymn that rose full and clear from the hearts of the assembly. Alternate prayer and singing fell upon Harry's perturbed spirit like balm, and as his eye rested from time to time upon the little form and earnest face beside him, so child-

like, so devout, he longed for the same "peace, passing all understanding," that was so evidently her portion. Thus the time passed pleasantly and profitably away till the sounding horn called them to the public services at the stand.

Harry sought to obtain a seat in the altar, but the gate-keeper told him politely that he was directed only to admit professors of religion. Much disappointed, he turned away and found a seat among the congregation. Here he was again subjected to the confusion of the crowd. After the sermon, as the singing and prayer were continued in the altar, he stood outside listening. Mr. Selden saw him, and a word from him to the gate-keeper admitted him.

The deep distress of some of the mourners touched his heart, and he asked himself if his own condition was so safe that he needed not to feel as they did. Some of the tender solemnity of yesterday returned; and when Mr. Selden asked him if he enjoyed the assurance of pardoned sin, he shook his head, but found himself unable otherwise to reply from excess of emotion. His friend spoke to him for a few moments in a gentle and affectionate manner, and begged him to present himself among those who desired the prayers of the people of God. But he shrunk from the publicity of such a step, and continued to sit apart, communing with his own spirit. Others, less judicious, urged the same request. One, on his steadily declining, spoke in terms that to him appeared harsh, of the sinful fear of man, quenching the spirit, pride of the human heart, etc. Hurt and grieved, perhaps also in some degree irritated, he left the altar and sought the soothing influence of the lonely grove.

He hurried on for some time, thinking he should never

get beyond the people, horses and vehicles, that filled the woods to a great distance around the encampment. When he at last supposed he had attained a perfect solitude, he sat down on a mossy rock and drank in the soft tranquillizing voices of nature: the falling of dry twigs, the rustle of tiny wings as they fluttered from thicket to thicket, the monotonous tapping of the woodpecker, the hum of busy insects. He shut his eyes, and could almost imagine himself amid the umbrageous haunts of his own home. But what is that? Surely the sound of the human voice. He listened more intently. Yes, it was the voice of prayer. He drew nearer, and for a moment caught distinctly the words of a heart-full petition for some beloved one, apparently in a condition similar to his own. He almost expected, in the excitement of the hour, to hear his own name and case borne up before the mercy seat. Another moment, and he felt that he had no right to be a hearer of those sacred closet breathings, and reluctantly withdrew.

At length he found himself in a lovely, secluded dell, inclosed on both sides by rocks and hills. A stream of crystal water gave its music to the solitude, which otherwise would have been almost oppressive. The relief of finding himself alone, at first answered all his desires. He cast himself down on the fresh, cool grass; he bathed his heated brow in the refreshing stream. But all did not calm his troubled spirit. As he strove to analyze his feelings, he thought of his mother, and exclaimed aloud, "Oh, my mother! if you were but here, that I might pour out my whole heart to you! Then you would help me to unravel the mazes in which I seem to be losing the power to judge of myself or of the influences around me."

He paused as if for an answer. The answer came; but it came from within. "Foolish boy! the fault is in yourself. You have even allowed an emotion of anger to arise in your breast. Examine yourself; see if the reproof was not deserved. Is there not an unwillingness to own yourself a sinner in the sight of God and man?"

He took out his Bible and turned to the words, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." He tried to examine his feelings and motives in the light of divine truth. Still his mind was not quite clear in regard to his duty, but his heart softened and again he longed for his mother's sympathizing presence. The words involuntarily burst from his lips:

> "Can a woman's tender care
> Cease toward the child she bare?"

The answer in the next lines turned his thoughts into a higher, holier, channel:

> "Yes, she may forgetful be
> Yet will *I* remember thee."

The words seemed to pour light into his confused mind. "Yes, yes, I have a friend that sticketh closer even than a mother. He will help me." Then he prayed fervently that he might be guided into all truth, and have the humble, teachable spirit of a little child.

He rose calm and trustful, and in pleasant meditation followed the windings of the little stream, till the shadows, retreating far up the hill-sides, bade him return.

As he drew near the encampment, he met Mr. Selden.

"Why Harry, my brother," he said, putting his arm through his, "where have you been? I have been looking for you all about the ground."

This affectionate address renewed Harry's emotion, and a serious smile was all the answer he could give. They walked in silence to the tent, which they reached just in time for tea. The gay crowd had mostly withdrawn to their homes, while those that remained, finding themselves so far in the minority, put on at least the semblance of respect for the occasion, as well as for the feelings of their hosts. Several ladies and one or two gentlemen were to be the guests of Mrs. Austen for the night.

Harry and Mr. Selden went after tea to one of the company tents, where they found the exercises becoming more and more interesting. Many were seeking with their whole hearts that Saviour whom they had so long neglected. One young lady attracted their regard who had not sought in vain, having received the "oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." The beaming joy of her countenance, and her expressions of humble love and gratitude to that compassionate Redeemer, who had just put the new song into her mouth, were most touching. Harry would willingly have sat at her feet the rest of the evening, listening to the ecstatic praises of this-new born soul, but the time for the evening sermon drew near, and all dispersed to meet again in the altar.

As Harry reëntered the inner circle, he paused, struck by the grandeur and beauty of the scene. The ground was now completely lighted. In front of the stand, a long line of sparkling lamps was suspended in the form

of an arch, above the head of the speaker. At the entrance of each snowy-curtained tent, one bright light beamed like a star, while others hung in various positions about the trees, glittering and wavering among the branches. But the principal illumination was dispensed from four equidistant points within the circle, between the tents and the seats. These were a kind of table, elevated about six or seven feet upon four posts, and covered with earth to prevent ignition. On the top of each blazed a fire of pitch pine, streaming in long wreaths of flame, high among the branches, and sending a ruddy glow far into the depths of the surrounding forest. No description can approach the reality, but those who have been privileged to behold a Baltimore camp-meeting. will easily recall the enchantment of the moment. The dark canopy of leaves above only enhanced by contrast the whiteness of the tents as they stood in far sweeping lines around.

Groups of worshippers were leaving the tents and gathering to their places; the glare of the fires revealing now the deeply anxious features, then the bright anticipation of the coming feast, and sending their long reaching shadows upon the ground.

Harry lingered as if spell bound, till a minister rose in the stand and commenced singing that magnificent hymn,

"Oh for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace."

Every tongue was ready and the full swell of the voices went up through the dark dome above.

A friendly voice aroused Harry from his trance of

delight. "Why, Harry, what are you dreaming about?"

Starting, he turned and saw Mr. Austen.

"Mr. Austen, I am glad to see you have come; Mary has not been half herself without you. When did you get here?"

"A few moments after you left the tent, Susan informed me. Now I hope to stay till the breaking up. But come, we are transgressing the rules by standing here. Let us go into the altar."

They moved on together, and as Mr. Austen was known to the gate-keeper, they met with no opposition and found comfortable seats. After this, Harry was always admitted whenever he presented himself.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WATERS OF A FULL CUP.

"For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD, thy Redeemer."—ISAIAH liv. 7, 8.

THE next day was Sunday, and as usual on that day, the crowd was immense. Susan was obliged to be with her sister, receiving and accommodating the numerous visitors that flocked to the hospitable board of the Austens. It was an uncomfortable day to Harry, except when he could steal away to the beautiful dell, and either enjoy perfect solitude or the conversation of his friend Mr. Selden.

He was glad when the day was over, for it pained him to witness the profanation of its sacred hours, by so much riding about, so much idle talking and jesting. Many thoughtless young men, who were closely engaged in business during the week, had seized a day of freedom, as they considered it, and with young girls as thoughtless as themselves, made it a jaunt of pleasure to come to camp-meeting. While there, the solemn exercises were no more than a spectacle for their entertainment, and their behavior was of course in harmony with their views. Harry agreed with Susan and the Austens in wishing that there might never be another camp-meeting with the Sabbath included.

When the last of the triflers had taken leave, every one was tired with the exhausting heat, dust and confusion of the day, and there was a general lull throughout the ground. Prayer-meetings in the altar and tents were suspended, and conversation, with the occasional singing of hymns, had taken their place.

The next morning, prayer-meeting was more than usually solemn. Mr. Foster remarked on the fatigues and discomforts of the preceding day, and urged upon those who were favored thus to meet for prayer in "the cool, the silent, and the fragrant hour," to seek for the whole armor of God, as a defence against the trials and temptations of the day.

As Harry left the altar, he could already see the people flocking in from every direction, and determined to profit if possible by the advice just heard, he turned aside from the busy scene, and sought the seclusion of his favorite dell. There, with no eye upon him but the all-seeing One, he gave himself up to reading, meditation and prayer. So entirely did he become absorbed, that, when he reached the encampment, he found the congregation assembled.

He regretted that indisposition had thus far prevented him from hearing the presiding elder, who was so much beloved and respected by the Austens; but on this occasion he was to be the speaker. He was a large, square-built man, of dignified bearing. To be called handsome he had no pretensions, save that his rich brown hair shaded without concealing a brow of no common fairness and amplitude. What his other features lost in beauty, they gained in expression. Who that has watched the lighting up of his small, but speaking eye—the varied distortions, it may be said, of his

large mouth, so instinct with the most solemn or tender emotions, ever regretted the absence of symmetry. His voice, full, clear and deep, sent a thrill of conviction to the heart of the sinner, or in tones of melting tenderness poured the fullness and pureness of the Gospel into the soul of the desponding.

On this occasion he took for his text, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." He commenced by noticing the awful, but plain inference from the words, that man is at a distance from God—not in position, for "he is about our bed and about our path, and spyeth out all our ways," but in character, in condition. He spoke of the infinite holiness of the Divine Being, such as our sin-beclouded faculties cannot in the slightest degree conceive—of his immeasurable abhorrence of sin. Not with any vindictiveness as man abhors, but, to use a faint figure, his pure nature abhors sin as our human flesh shrinks from the contact of fire. He cannot endure it. He dwelt upon the condition of man by inheritance, and by actual transgression—the hopelessness of his case, so far as regards himself, and sweeping away every refuge of lies by which he seeks to work out his own salvation; he proceeded to unfold in the clearest manner, the plan of redemption as devised in the counsels of the Trinity, and wrought out in the immaculate life and vicarious sufferings of Christ.

In breathless attention the audience drank in the solemn words. Tears, sobs and groans, were heard throughout the assembly, during the first part of tho discourse, but before the close, many an aching heart was made to rejoice, and the shouts of the redeemed were heard in the camp.

Susan had often stolen a glance towards the corner

where Harry sat, and had noticed the intensity of his gaze upon the face of the preacher for some time. But at last she observed he buried his face in his handkerchief, and when the sermon was ended, and through the prayer, he still sat motionless. She longed to go to him, and speaking to Mr. Selden, who had come down from the stand, they went together.

Mr. Selden spoke to him. He did not reply, but looked up at him with such an expression of unutterable woe as appalled the hearts of his friends. They both tried by gentle and kind words to arouse him, but in vain. Mr. Selden then asked him if he was willing to present himself as a mourner. He assented, and passively yielding to the impulse of his friend's hand, rose and went forward. He kneeled in the midst of a group of young persons, whose vehement cries for mercy made it impossible to hold any audible communication with him. Feeling that this was no ordinary case, after a short consultation with Susan, Mr. Selden led him, still without resistance on his part, from the altar.

At first they bent their steps towards Mr. Austen's tent, but seeing it full of company, they turned to that of the preachers. Susan, pale and tearful, accompanied them till near the entrance. Then, as she grasped the hand she had unconsciously taken, Harry turned towards her, and as his cold fingers closed over hers, his lips moved. Her quick perception caught the words, "pray for me," and she left them.

Mr. Preston had not for a moment lost sight of his beloved young friend, and as soon as he could disengage himself from other duties, he followed them. Some of the other preachers came in with him, but it was long before any one could ascertain the exact nature of this unusual manifestation of distress. At last, while Mr.

Preston was engaged in prayer for him, that he might realize the healing efficacy of the atoning blood of Christ, it was noticed that he joined in the petitions. When again his friends sought to penetrate his feelings, he looked up with an earnest, distressed expression, and said in a low voice, "Oh, sin, sin! I never knew what it was before." His convulsed lips refusing control, he again turned away, covering his face.

It was apparent that he had heard none of the latter part of the sermon; but from the moment that a view of his own sinful heart had been presented to his awakened conscience, horror had taken hold upon him, and he had surrendered himself to all the gloom and agony of the sight, without being able to realize the remedy.

The judicious conversation and prayers of his friends gradually restored him to a more healthy state of mind, and the clear scriptural views that he had received from his parents began to return. Although he had gained an acquaintance with "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," such as he had never before experienced, he no longer felt its unmitigated bitterness. Mr. Austen had hastened to him as soon as he learned from Susan the distressed state of his mind, and he was now able to enter with interest into the conversation of his friends. The afternoon sermon was of a kind to lead him to appreciate the consoling offers of redemption. Gradually a deeper peace flowed into his wounded soul, and he was enabled to rejoice in a clear sense of pardon. His well instructed mind was now ready to receive and rest in the fullness and freeness of salvation as it is in Jesus, wondering that he should for a moment have failed to apply to the great Physician who is so much more willing to bestow his blessings upon us, than we are to ask for them.

He joined the family at tea as usual, but his great languor and paleness revealed to his anxious friends the terrible nature of the conflict through which he had passed.

As the time for night-preaching approached, Susan was preparing to go, when Mrs. Preston joined her in the little sleeping-apartment. Taking her hand, she drew her towards her and looking at her heavy eyes, said:

"Susie, my love, I cannot let you go out to-night. I am going to stay with Harry; you as well as the rest of us feel the effect of our anxiety for this dear boy. I will take the responsibility of keeping you with me."

Susan answered by throwing her arms round her neck and struggling to repress a burst of tears. They were alone, and as there was no eye upon her but this true friend, the effort was vain. Mrs. Preston could fully understand and sympathize with the gentle girl, and believing that those tears were kindly sent to relieve the overcharged heart, she only returned the embrace, and whispered tender words of sympathy.

As soon as Susan could command her voice, she raised her head, saying, "Oh, Mrs. Preston, you must think me very weak?"

"No, my dear, do not say so. Your feelings are only natural. We all have been exceedingly agitated. Harry is very dear to all who know him, and you necessarily saw more of his distress than any one except brother Selden. I have wondered that you could control your feelings so long."

Susan thanked her, and as Mrs. Preston thought she would sooner regain her calmness if left alone, she pressed her fondly to her bosom, kissed her pale cheek, and passed into the front tent.

Harry extended his hand to her, as she took a seat beside him, and said with a smile, "My mother."

"Yes, my dear Harry, we all wish she was here."

"We do, indeed. I constantly think of her. But my meaning then was, that you are my mother while I am so far from her."

"Thank you, my child. It makes me happy to be regarded in that light by you."

After a pause, he said, "I am sorry to have caused so much trouble to my friends. I am very happy now, but I hope never to forget the awful revelation that has been made to me, of the sinfulness of my heart. I believe if it had continued much longer without a veil, reason itself must have yielded."

While he was speaking, Susan came in, and with her usual sweet composed manner, took a chair at some distance from them. Harry again held out his hand, for his heart seemed peculiarly to soften towards any of his friends who had manifested sympathy with his suffering. She timidly placed her hand in his, but consciously averted her face, lest there might be some traces left of her recent agitation. But he pronounced her name, and then she looked at him. His eye dwelt for a moment on her features, where the color came and went as he said, "I have distressed you too, Susie, but you now rejoice with me, I know."

She could not trust herself to speak, but smiled upon him, comforting herself that the tent was imperfectly lighted. She forgot that, though dark to her, it was much less so to those whose eyes had become adapted to it.

Mrs. Preston instantly divined the truth, that although their voices had been so low as to prevent words from

reaching Harry; yet the separating curtains were too slight to prevent him from involuntarily catching the tones, and learning that deep feeling was there, as well as tears, and on his account. But he had too much delicacy to notice it further, and quietly resumed the conversation.

"My mind is recovering its healthy tone, and I now can appropriate the promises with great comfort. Even now, they fill my soul with a solemn peace far surpassing anything I could have imagined."

Their hearts were all too full for much conversation, and little more was said till the congregation dispersing, the inmates of the tents returned, and all were willing after so agitating a day, to seek the repose of the night.

CHAPTER XVII.

CAMP LIFE.

"Here, scoffer, smooth the scorn from off thy lip;
Nor you, nor I ... .
May sit in judgment and condemn the scene.
Though we approve not, wiser heads than ours,
Have bowed and worshipped at the woodland altar,
And pressed the temporary couch at night,
Within the wavy tent, and often found
The peace which they had sought elsewhere in vain."

T. BUCHANAN READ.

THE little family circle met again in the morning, to join their grateful hearts around the domestic altar. With new and joyful emotions Harry now offered up the sacrifice of prayer and praise. Every word of Scripture, or of the sermons, seemed to glow with love, while he looked back upon the strange and terrible exercises of the past day, as upon a frightful dream. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which was celebrated on that day, was to him, indeed, a feast of fat things. The whole scene was as unique as it was touchingly simple. The table was spread in the altar; at its head stood the presiding elder, dignified and full of solemn emotion, as many must remember him on such occasions, singing with peculiar unction his favorite hymn.

"Oh, Jesus my Saviour, to thee I submit,
With love and thanksgiving fall down at thy feet.
The sacrifice offer—my soul, flesh and blood;
their vo... ...ou art my Redeemer, my Lord and my God."

The communicants passed in at one entrance, kneeled at the benches prepared for them, and received the sacred elements; then quietly retired on the opposite side, and thus, without any confusion, resumed their places in the congregation. It was a season long to be remembered, especially by those who, like Harry, regarded it as the solemn seal of their covenant engagements so lately assumed.

After the second sermon, Harry lingered in the altar, increasingly interested in the heart-touching scenes that were transpiring there. He found his sympathies drawn out, by seeing others oppressed under some degree of the burden which had well-nigh crushed his own soul, and it was a cordial to him to impart heavenly consolation to those stricken ones. While thus engaged, there were other eyes, of which he was unconscious, resting upon him, some with surprise, others with deep interest.

Just as Mrs. Austen was taking her place in the congregation, a servant came to tell her that Miss Rose Carter had come, and a gentleman with her. She hastened to receive them. Rose introduced her to Mr. Forrester, of whom she had already heard as a Carlisle student, and their travelling companion. Both inquired for Susan and Harry, expressing no little vexation because they had gone into the congregation.

"Mrs. Austen, I assure you it is not my fault that we were not here earlier," said the gentleman; "but Miss Carter is so very timid that she would scarcely allow me to drive out of a walk."

"Indeed, Mary, you must not believe one word he says. You can't think how furiously he drove. I was frightened out of my wits. And see how dusty I am."

"I am glad at any rate that you got here safely," was

the smiling reply. "You shall have the dust brushed off, and then we shall be in time to hear the sermon."

After brushing and bringing the scattered ringlets into order, the young beauty declared herself ready. Chairs were brought out and they joined the group already seated in the shade of a large tree, to hear the sermon. When that was over, Susan was summoned, as Rose was to return after tea by moonlight. The meeting of the friends was affectionate, but the sprightly remarks of Rose and Forrester were not quite in harmony with Susan's feelings. She however rallied her spirits as well as she could and conducted them around the ground. They saw much that evidently excited their mirth, and not unfrequently their scorn and contempt in the homely arrangements of some of the unpretending homes; but nothing that touched a better feeling till they drew near the altar, and stood looking at the novel scene. Presently they discovered Harry talking earnestly with a youth, apparently several years his junior. They could not see his face, but that of Harry, as he bent over him, was full of interest and affection. In a little while they both rose together. The boy threw his arms round Harry's neck, and while a radiant smile beamed on his face, he uttered from time to time expressions of thankfulness and praise. Harry seemed equally full of deep feeling and joy.

Our young friends stood in mute wonder, perfectly unable to understand what they witnessed. Mr. Selden saw them and came to renew his acquaintance with Rose, whom he had frequently met at Hunter's Lodge and Forestdale, the home of Susan. Forrester's eyes, as he stood leaning on the rails of the altar, were riveted on the interesting group before them; at last he spoke out:

"Well, Bradford was always called one of the finest-looking fellows at Dickenson. I am not apt to notice such things much, but I must say there is something in his face now that I never discovered before. It actually shines, and the boy, though certainly not handsome, has the same singularly radiant expression."

"Yes," responded Mr. Selden, "you are right. There is in Harry's face to-day something far beyond earthly beauty. My dear young friends, if you have never witnessed it before, you now see in those faces a ray of that glory which caused the face of Moses to shine, so that the Israelites could not steadfastly look upon it."

Seeing that his own ardent feelings had carried him beyond the comprehension of his auditors, he added, "It is the joy of a new-born soul,—communion with God, that lights up those faces. It is the realization of sins forgiven."

"I never could see," exclaimed Rose, with flashing eyes, "what sins Harry Bradford had to be forgiven. He always was just as good as he could be."

"Ah, young lady," was the reply, "if you had seen him yesterday, when the Spirit of God revealed to him his inmost soul, you would think differently."

Forrester listened in grave astonishment, but Rose turned indignantly away, and taking Susan's arm drew her towards the tent as she gave vent to her excited feelings.

"I do think it is wicked for ministers to try to frighten people so, making them think they have committed some great crime. It seems very mysterious to me. I never expected to hear that Harry had done anything so very bad—and I do not believe he has."

"He is just what you have always thought him, dear Rose; but in the pure eye of God we are all corrupt. When by the light of the Gospel we see our own hearts as they really are, we are necessarily struck with horror."

"Well, I can't understand it, I must acknowledge."

"I fear you do not, dearest Rose; but I wish you did."

"And I am glad I do not, for it makes you cry to speak of it, Sue. So let us talk of something pleasanter."

The two girls had by this time laid aside their bonnets in Susan's little room, and Rose drew her into the front part of the tent, where they found Mr. and Mrs. Austen, Mr. and Mrs. Preston and others. All who had known Rose before were pleased to have her with them, and the conversation turned upon circumstances connected with the neighborhood of her home. Some one coming in, remarked that there were clouds gathering in the west, and there would probably be showers. This was welcome news to all but Rose, who exclaimed:

"Then what am I to do? How am I to get home?"

"Oh, that," said Mr. Austen, "is of no consequence at all. You can stay with us and see a specimen of camp life; I do not believe my little sister will refuse to share her bed with you."

"No, indeed, I shall be delighted to have you stay. You can as well as not, for Carrie Landon went home after dinner, and you can take her place."

"But are you not afraid to stay out here in the woods, if there should be a thunder storm?" asked Rose, in some trepidation.

"No, indeed; but we need not anticipate trouble. There may be no shower after all."

No more was said on the subject, though Rose continued, from time to time, to cast anxious glances towards the sky, where it could be seen through the branches of the trees. As it still continued blue and serene as usual, she became satisfied. Then she wondered what had become of Mr. Forrester, and while she was speaking, he was seen approaching with Harry.

Turning to Mrs. Austen, she asked, "Do you remember, Mary, that brother George used to call Harry sunshine? Mother said, if he was sunshine, Sue ought to be called moonlight," and she laughed at the remembrance, as she turned to Susan and drew her fair face close to her own.

A gentleman, who was present, remarked with an admiring glance at the two sweet faces, thus lovingly brought together, "I am most strikingly reminded just now of a lily and a rose."

Rose, with a conscious blush for her own part of the compliment, replied, still laughing, "Oh, Sue's name means lily, and we often used to call her so at home."

By this time, Harry and Forrester, who had been stopping to speak to some person, came up. Harry greeted Rose with evident pleasure, and they all obeyed a summons to tea. As soon as they rose from the table, Mr. Austen proposed to make an inspection of the weather, and invited the younger part of the company to go with him.

All agreed that it would be unsafe for Rose to attempt returning home, and if Mr. Forrester must go, he had no time to lose. He promised to call and explain to Mrs. Munroe the arrangement, and to come out the next day for Rose. This being settled, Mr. Austen and the young ladies returned, leaving Harry to see Forrester off.

As the young men waited for the horse to be harnessed, Harry said, kindly laying his hand on the shoulder of his companion,

"Forrester, I wish you could stay with us."

"Thank you, Bradford," he replied gravely, "I should like to very well, but," he added, half laughing, "I believe it is better that I should not. I am getting rather low-spirited already. I must hurry back to the city, and shake it off."

Harry answered with warmth, "No, no, my dear fellow, do not shake it off, but rather encourage it as the prelude to a joy of which you can at present form no conception. Forrester, come back in the morning, as early as you can, with a manly resolution to seek an interest in the blessings of the atonement. You have received instruction enough on these subjects to know that it is the only safety for your immortal soul. Let us both go back to college prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder against the tide of temptation that will be ready to sweep us away, if we do not secure a strength beyond our own."

The laugh had vanished from the face of Forrester, but the buggy was ready. He cordially returned the pressure of Harry's hand—looked as if he would have spoken—but sprang in and drove off.

The rain overtook him before he reached home, so Mrs. Munroe was entirely satisfied that her sister had staid with her friends.

The shower, though short, was sufficiently copious to render it imprudent for the ladies to venture out. They all remained in the tent, while the gentlemen went into the congregation. Scarcely, however, had the text been given out, when the rain poured down again so plentifully

as to make it necessary for them to disperse, and hold meetings in several of the larger tents. The gentlemen went some one way, some another, except Mr. Austen, who remained with the ladies, conversing and singing hymns till it was time to retire for the night.

There were repeated showers during the night, and Rose waked in considerable alarm at hearing the rain descending in torrents upon the slight shelter over her bed. Susan smiled at her fears, assuring her that they were as secure as if they were at home.

"But will not the rain run in under the sides of the tent?"

"No, you forget there is a plank floor. Mr. Austen would never have consented to our coming if he had not taken every precaution to make us comfortable. Besides, I saw him examining the trenches and having them cleared out, so the water will run off, and how refreshing it will be to have the dust laid for the rest of the meeting."

Thus reassured, Rose composed herself again to sleep, though she could see the flashes of lightning through the thin canvas walls, and hear the sublime voice of the storm, as it roared among the trees or thundered in the clouds, sweeping away in the distance.

The early morning was damp and cheerless to Rose, and it was not without reluctance that she left her pillow at the early hour the usages of the place demanded. She found Susan up and dressing, when she opened her eyes.

"Why, Susan," she murmured half awake, "you are surely not dressing! It is scarcely light yet."

"Oh, yes, dear Rosie, it is time to get up now. You must hasten or we shall not be ready for family prayer."

"Family prayer!" she started up, exclaiming. "Do you have family prayer out here? I declare this is as bad as old school-days. I hoped when I left Bloomington, that I had left such barbarisms behind—getting up so early I mean. But if you will help me, I shall soon be ready." Then, as she twisted the last curl into its place—"How damp and cold it is. I wish I had brought a thick shawl with me."

"I can lend you one; we always bring more than we want ourselves, on purpose for our friends; and you must not go out without overshoes—here is a pair."

Rose laughed, and said that it was well she had somebody to take care of her, for she had never learned to do it herself.

They found that Mr. Austen's care had caused a large fire to be kindled in front of the tent, which dried the curtains, and lent its genial glow to make all cheerful and comfortable within. The gentlemen were standing about it, conversing and enjoying its acceptable warmth.

In consequence of the dampness, there could be no public prayer-meeting, so Harry and Susan walked out after breakfast, to show Rose the ground. They passed several tents where the inmates had evidently taken no precautions against the weather; consequently they presented a most forlorn and comfortless aspect. Doubtless, if their domestic scenes in town had been as open to the inspection of others, the want of forethought and good judgment would have been as apparent and quite as disastrous in their consequences.

The bright beams of the ascending sun were now beginning to make glad the face of nature, which in return laughed and glittered, as if conscious of the seasonable refreshment. The wet straw had been removed

from the altar, and its place supplied by that which was dry and clean. The planks used for seats had been turned over, and thus made comfortable for the congregation.

Rose was again in fine spirits, and highly amused at the various and somewhat ludicrous scenes she witnessed among the "*drowned out*;" but not finding the response to her gay sallies, to which she was accustomed from Harry, she rallied him upon his gravity.

"I declare, Harry, you have grown surprisingly old since you came out here; I think I had better take you back with me before your hair turns grey. Do you remember our stage-ride, and how you made us laugh? now you scarcely smile at any of those droll objects in the wet tents. Susan, have you been very cross to him, that he is so gloomy?"

Harry saw the color rising in Susan's cheek, and answered for her: "No, Rose, Susan has been as you and I have always found her—a kind and gentle sister. But I came here with a high and solemn object in view, which, I rejoice to believe, has been accomplished in and for me. I may appear grave to you, but surely not gloomy, for I never knew what true happiness was before; and it is my most affectionate desire for you, as I know it is Susan's, that you may be made partaker of the same."

The gaiety of this amiable, but pleasure-loving girl was checked for the moment; but dreading the continuance of the subject, she adroitly changed the conversation, and thus for the present defeated the kind efforts of her friends to impress upon her mind the solemn realities in which they were so deeply engaged.

When they returned to the tent, they found Mr.

Forrester, and Rose immediately began to talk of going home. This was strenuously opposed by all, except Forrester, who was too polite to make any objection if Miss Carter wished to go. Rose used various arguments to prove the necessity for her return, which were so ably met by her friends that she at last yielded, to the manifest satisfaction of Forrester.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TENTS STRUCK.

"Say, when I leave this consecrated scene,
Where now so safe, so rapt, so blest, I've been,
How shall I seek, and where obtain the power
To guard my threatened soul in danger's hour?
Spirit of prayer! indwelling spirit! thou,
And thou alone, this ægis canst bestow!
Shielded by thee, when worldly thoughts intrude,
Still shall I keep my soul's pure solitude."

MRS. AMELIA OPIE.

THIS was the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, and the services were deeply interesting. The presiding elder again preached, and this time with very different effect on Harry; for his peace seemed to flow like a river, widening and deepening in its progress towards the ocean of eternal joy. Forrester scarcely left him a moment during the day; and as soon as dinner was over, they disappeared together in the direction of the dell. There, on a mossy rock by the margin of the little stream, sat the two young men, discoursing on subjects of the deepest moment to their future interests. Harry found Forrester a more willing auditor than Rose. He had been religiously trained in a pious family circle, and listened with tender seriousness to the persuasions and arguments of his friend. His heart had been deeply moved by the scenes he had witnessed in the altar the day before; and when they returned to the encampment, it was evident that he would not take back to Baltimore

the same light-hearted thoughtlessness that he brought to the ground. Rose studiously avoided any serious conversation, and returned home rather disconcerted that two of her beaux had become so insensible to her spells.

As the encampment was to break up the next day, the guests of the Austens left them in the evening, except the Prestons and Harry, whose mind had been so deeply exercised at first for himself and afterwards for others, that he had not become much acquainted with them; and the momentary regret at parting was more than balanced by the quiet and freedom from ceremony secured by their absence.

As the hallowed hours of this last day passed on, the number of inquirers for the way to Zion increased, and the more earnestly were their faces turned thitherward. Harry was almost unwilling to leave them long enough to take the needful refreshment. He failed not to weep with those that wept, and to rejoice with those that rejoiced. Many a one received from his lips the timely application of that word which giveth light, and many a one did he exhort and persuade to cease going about to establish their own righteousness, and to submit themselves to the righteousness of Christ. His friends looked upon him in joyful hope of soon seeing him take his place upon the walls of Zion, to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation through Christ.

One tender heart rejoiced and trembled before this realization of her highest wishes for him. Remembering Mrs. Rodney's too visible anxiety to promote an attachment between him and Rose, Susan wondered if he would find her prepared to renounce the soft indulgences of home to share his labor of love, to walk patiently and

bravely by his side, smoothing and gladdening the rough path of an itinerant. She knew, much as she loved the beautiful companion of her childhood, that she was not yet the being who could fill that place. Would she ever become so? In return for such a heart, would she not willingly renounce all, and do or be anything to meet that destiny? A strange sadness prevented the answer, and with swimming eyes, she wondered that her exulting aspirations for her brother Harry, had faded in a gloom from which she found it impossible to emerge.

Evening came, and as they gathered around the table for the last time in their sylvan home, all seemed to feel the approaching separation, so that the downcast eyes and pensive air of the quiet and retiring Susan were less conspicuous.

Night, that had hitherto brought comparative silence and repose to the little community, was now vocal with prayer and praise. Many were unwilling to lose the last hours of this favored occasion, and refused to give sleep to their eyes, or slumber to their eyelids, while those dear to them were tossed with tempest and not comforted. Harry would fain have joined in this vigil, but he had already lost so much rest, and passed through so much to exhaust his energies, that his friends interposed and prevailed upon him to seek the repose he needed. It was in vain. Sleep refused to visit his pillow while he could hear the mournful cries of the sorrowing ones, and the rapturous shouts of the ransomed, all around him.

After a short deliberation, he arose and silently dressing, stepped out into the cool night air. How changed the scene. The stand was voiceless, the altar deserted,

the seats unoccupied. He wandered into the altar and sat down. The entire solitude was favorable for meditation; and the remembrance of that hour of bitter agony when he drank the wormwood and the gall returned, and again he realized the peace shed abroad in his heart by the pardoning love of his Saviour. As he recalled the scenes of penitential sorrow and of rejoicing faith that he had witnessed in that rude inclosure, each individual rose before him with distinct identity, and he prayed that each one might be as a light in the world, dispensing a knowledge of the glorious Gospel to all around. He prayed for himself, that his way might be made plain before him, for though in his boyish visions he had hoped to be a minister, he now trembled in view of the momentous work, asking in deep humility to be prepared to meet it, if it was the will of God to call him to the sacred office. Gladly would he have thus "wrestled till the break of day," but the chillness of the night air forbade. He rose and passed out.

Lights still gleamed from several of the tents, and as he walked slowly around, he could hear, through the closed curtains of some, the low moan of penitence, mingled with the soothing language of intercessory prayer; from others, the voice of thanksgiving and praise.

Again the picturesque beauty of the scene arrested him, and he lingered to take a last look. The moon had almost set, and did but silver the tops of the lofty trees. The lamps had burned themselves out; but the fire-stands had been replenished, and he stood admiring the effect of the streams of heated air, as they wildly tossed the branches like a mighty wind. Continuing his walk, he looked into the large company-tents. They were

crowded, but seeing none of his own friends, he pursued his way towards home.

Scarcely had he composed himself to rest, when a triumphant strain of music from a hundred voices burst upon his ear. Hastily resuming his dress, he opened the curtains and beheld, what he had often heard described, but the singular appearance of which he could never have imagined. This was a long procession issuing from the Baltimore tent, and joining another as it emerged from an opening that communicated with the outer circle; all singing with wild enthusiasm,

"Ye virgin souls arise,
With all the dead awake;
Unto salvation wise,
Oil in your vessels take;
Upstarting at the midnight cry,
Behold your heavenly Bridegroom nigh.

"He comes, he comes, to call
The nations to his bar,
And take to glory all
Who meet for glory are;
Make ready for your free reward;
Go forth with joy to meet your Lord."

Several times they passed around the inner circle, while the glare of the fires, and the shadowy obscurity of the intervening spaces, heightened the scenic effect. Harry was of too rational and well-disciplined a character ever to have joined in such an outbreak of excitement; but in the present ardor of his feelings, he gazed at the spectacle with a vivid appreciation of its sublimity, and never regretted that he had once witnessed so extraordinary a scene.

Of course there was little time left for sleep, and when

Harry waked he felt utterly unfit to commence a long stage ride in the heat and dust. He walked out into the morning air, hoping for refreshment, but the scene now presented was in painful contrast to those of the preceding days. Persons were hurrying from place to place, with that workday, business air that had so long been laid aside for the calmness of devotion. Some carried valises, cloaks, and umbrellas, others exchanged hasty words of parting, while their horses pawed and stamped on that ground so lately exclusively appropriated to the use of worshippers. In every direction the flapping cloth, and falling frames of the tents, admonished him that this was no continuing city.

Mr. Preston came to join them in a hurried breakfast, and noticing Harry's worn and exhausted appearance, he drew from him a confession of his night's adventures. He pretended to scold him for his imprudence.

"And now, my lad," said he, "as you have proved your unfitness to take care of yourself, I shall relieve you of that charge, till to-morrow. Instead of taking the stage to-day, you are to go with us to my father's, which is just in your route, and secure a good night's rest before you go home."

"Thank you, my dear brother," said Harry, in some perplexity between his sense of duty and his sense of fatigue; "but I shall be expected at home to-night, and my mother would be anxious if I failed to meet the horse at Woodbury."

"But I have attended to all that, my dear boy. I wrote a long letter to your mother, yesterday, giving her an account of you, and saying that I should persuade you to stay at least one night with us. If Pete and Joe should both take a ride over to Woodbury-without meet-

ing you, I have no idea that they have grown so old and sedate as to object to a frolic the next day again. So, that is all settled."

Harry was grateful for the kindness of his friends, and in this view of the subject, was glad to avail himself of the invitation.

Once more the horn summoned them to the public prayer-meeting. As many as could, obeyed. In addition to the usual reading, prayer, and singing, several of the preachers spoke a few affectionate parting words to those in whose ears they had proclaimed the message of salvation. The voice of weeping ascended with the voice of rejoicing. Harry was much affected at finding himself surrounded by those with whom he had conversed at the mourners' bench, and his hand grasped with fervent blessings on his head. Finally, he had to break away from them to avoid losing all command of himself. Returning towards the tent, he at first thought he had missed his way; a moment's observation convinced him that he was right, but he found the dear little home prostrate on the ground, and the servants busy preparing it for the wagon.

Mr. Preston's carriage was waiting and the sad farewell must be spoken. Those only who have thus dwelt together in the grove in the unrestrained intercourse of brothers and sisters, where idle ceremony and cold-hearted etiquette give place to the most endearing simplicity, those only can estimate how sad is such a farewell. Harry knew not when he should meet some of these dear friends again. Even Susan, not till another vacation, and it was with a heavy heart that he took his seat in the carriage. Mr. Preston, more accustomed to such scenes, tried by his cheerful words and manner to dispel the

cloud, and at last told them he could not stay for any more tears and sentimental speeches, so, gathering up the reins, he drove off of the ground.

They reached his father's house in a few hours, where they were cordially received and made comfortable. A long, sound sleep restored Harry to his usual vigor, and he was ready for the stage the next morning. Nothing of particular interest occurred on the journey, and he reached Woodbury in safety, where he found faithful Joe, with white teeth conspicuously displayed, standing beside Fleetfoot.

"Well, Joe, my good boy, I am glad to see you. How are you?"

"Fust rate, Mars Harry; how does you find yourself, sir?"

"Quite well, Joe. And how is my mother and the family?"

"Oh, Miss Sophy most as well as ever, sir; and all de rest well, too."

"Did you come for me yesterday?"

"Oh, yes, sir. Mars Davy said he didn't think you would be here, but I might as well come, any how."

Harry found the family assembled to receive him. Virginia was there with her little Sophy, and George soon came. All were eager to hear news from their friends in Baltimore, but little was said of the camp-meeting, for as Mrs. Bradford had not yet communicated the entire contents of Mr. Preston's letter except to Willie, the others felt little interest in it. When Mrs. Bradford and her two boys found themselves alone in her room, she and Willie sat down one each side of Harry, while he answered their numerous questions, and related as faithfully as he could, the interesting particulars of the meeting. The

conversation was long and deeply affecting to all. Tears and smiles were indulged without restraint, for these three hearts were one. Willie's fervid imagination and pious enthusiasm kindled at the recital, and he could not easily be consoled in his regret that he was not there.

The remaining days of Harry's vacation were very precious, and carefully improved; for both mother and son seemed to grudge every moment in which they were separated. Willie's long cherished hope of commencing a regular course of study with Mr. Lambert was talked over and was now about to be realized, as that gentleman was willing to adapt his requirements to the peculiar circumstances of his still feeble and delicate pupil. It was decided that he should commence as soon as Harry returned to college.

Mrs. Bradford found the parting with her beloved son less depressing than before. Then, although she had great confidence in the strength and integrity of his principles, he was young and had never openly taken his stand on the Lord's side. Now his position was different. He was an avowed disciple of his heavenly Master, full of an enlightened zeal for the advance of his kingdom, and the salvation of his fellow beings.

He had conversed fully and freely with his grandfather, who made a faint effort to induce him to join the Episcopal church. Harry expressed his great respect for that communion, and his admiration of the excellence and consistent piety of many of its members, but at the same time, in respectful but uncompromising terms avowed his preference for the church of his parents, and his belief that he could be more useful there than elsewhere. Col. Hunter soon ceased to argue, and

submitted with a melancholy feeling that it was vain to contend with fate. "Ichabod" was irrevocably written upon his house. Still he loved and respected his noble grandson, and having, by his remonstrance, discharged his duty to his ancient household gods, he gave way passively, and the subject was dropped.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE VEIL UPON THE HEART.

"Still rule the master passions. Age creeps on
And chills the blood, but touches not the heart;
For they dream still—No longer for themselves
'Tis true, but for the scions of their race,
Who, in their visions, hand their glories down
With undimmed ray. With all their soul absorbed
In these vain trifles, Heaven has no thought,
Nor death, and yet"——

Deep was the grief, not unmingled with vexation, of Mrs. Rodney when she heard of the result of the camp-meeting, and severely did she censure herself for allowing her weak indulgence to reject Harry's offer of declining the invitation of the Austens. But how could she suppose for a moment, that such a mind as that of Harry Bradford would not be repelled rather than attracted by such an extravagant and fanatical exhibition. But it was too late now to sit supinely lamenting the false step. Something must be done to retrieve the family honor; for she still persisted in considering the present heir as a nobody, a mere weak girl, totally unfit to sustain the dignity of the house of Hunter. It was most unlikely that he would live—indeed, with her present idea of his hopeless imbecility of mind as well as body, it was not desirable that he should. When Harry entered upon the inheritance, he would feel as the head of such a family must feel; he would assume the family name, marry Rose

Carter, she felt sure, and become a member of the church of his fathers. Thus contemplating the picture that her ardent wishes had drawn, her dazzled eyes could no longer judge of the realities of the case.

Mrs. Rodney had received as part of her patrimony a small estate, called Glen Cottage, adjoining that of her brother; but as her husband's property was in Baltimore, she continued to reside in that city during his life; then, on account of her children's education, she had remained there. They were all now married. The youngest, Hunter, was absent on his bridal tour at the time of Harry's visit. When he returned with his bride they were to make a part of her family. But while they were still absent, Mrs. Rodney had, with her usual energy and decision, matured her plans. Taking an early opportunity, she informed her children that she had concluded to give up the house to them for a few years, and remove to Glen Cottage. The young pair were in amazement, but remonstrance was without effect. She did not intend to make the change till the next spring, when the time of her tenant would expire, and she could remain at her brother's till the house was put in order for her reception.

In the meantime, Harry had returned to college, and was quietly pursuing his studies, little dreaming of the commotion in the mind of his aunt on his account. He met his friend Forrester with new interest. He had lost none of his seriousness on the subject of religion while at home with his mother and sisters. The young men were now much together, and the conversation and influence of Harry were so much blessed to Forrester, that when he went home at Christmas he united with the Episcopal church, of which his family were members. This circum-

stance did not separate the friends, but to the close of his college course, Forrester continued one of Harry's most valued friends.

Willie was able to attend school with tolerable regularity through the autumn, but as the weather became more uncomfortable, he was detained at home. Still his ardor was unabated, and he studied as much as his sister would allow him to, even when he could not recite with his classes. Mr. Lambert occasionally came to the lodge and examined him, so that he hoped to keep on without much loss of time.

Mrs. Bradford found frequent opportunities for conversation with her father, and used every effort to awaken in his mind an interest in religion; but the humbling doctrines of the cross were a constant stumbling stone in his way. If he expressed himself at all, it was manifest that he considered the chastisements he had received as far heavier than his deservings. Inheriting all the worldly advantages he could desire, he viewed them as his own, and any deprivation as an act of injustice. His friends caressed and flattered him, and he often had it in his power to oblige them, which he did with complacent thoughts of his own generosity. His slaves were his own property, to dispose of as he pleased, and while others were cruel, tyrannical masters, he pleased to make his comfortable and happy. Accordingly, in his own eyes, he was the source of blessings to them. He looked no higher, not acknowledging God the bountiful Bestower of all good, and himself the humble dependent steward. When his treasures were taken away, though he could scarcely have expressed it in words, he *felt* that it was an enemy that did it, and his heart was filled with the most rebellious murmurings.

One pleasant evening, soon after Harry returned to college, Mrs. Bradford had been visiting a sick child at the quarters, not far from the cabin occupied by her old nurse. She found it necessary to prolong her stay beyond her expectation, and intended to take the father of the child to see her safe home. But just as she was leaving the door she met her father, who had become alarmed at her detention, so they walked on together. As they drew near the dwelling of old Jack, their steps were arrested by the sound of a voice. It was moonlight, and there was no other light within. The pious old people were offering up their evening prayer.

Col. Hunter and his daughter paused, the one to listen, the other to join in the petitions. In his own simple dialect, but with the fervor and fluency of his race, Jack poured out his soul to his great Master in heaven, in thanksgiving for the blessings they enjoyed; that they were favored to belong to a kind master and mistress, who not only provided them with comforts for the body, but who allowed them so many spiritual privileges, asking with tearsthat they might be rewarded with all earthly blessings, and above all with eternal life at His right hand. Here, with faltering voice, in scarcely articulate whispers, he prayed that his dear master might be made sensible of his danger, of his wanderings from the only true and safe path, before it was forever too late; that he might be adopted into the family of God's dear children, and reunited to them who had gone before him into the kingdom of his Father in heaven.

Twice Col. Hunter moved as if to go, but something as often caused him to pause again, and not till the voice ceased did he leave the spot. His daughter knew that he was agitated by some emotion, for the arm on which

she leaned trembled, and his heart heaved against her hand with quick, irregular motions. The nature of those emotions she could not discover as nothing was said.

The night was warm and they found Willie sitting in the portico. Col. Hunter left his daughter at the steps and passing round an angle of the house, continued to walk about under the trees for some time. Willie made inquiries about the sick child, and after talking awhile with his sister, retired to his own room. Mrs. Bradford sat listening to the "voices of the night" for awhile, but finding that her father had passed through another entrance, and gone to his room, she sought her own, but with a troubled heart, lest her father should be displeased with the faithful old man, who had so openly avowed his opinion that he was not, in the sight of God, what he ought to be.

The next day being Sunday, Col. Hunter went with his daughter and Willie to the Methodist church; indeed he seldom went elsewhere now. Willie staid with Mr. and Mrs. Harlan to attend the second service. After tea, Mrs. Bradford sat on the portico with her father. When he had finished his cigar, she ventured to ask him how he liked the sermon in the morning. The answer came so tardily that she almost repented having asked.

"Well, my daughter, the truth is, I do not understand these things. Mr. Harlan is an eloquent man, but why this continual harping on *depravity—depravity?* as if we were all a set of criminals, deserving only of punishment here and hereafter. I believe if I entertained such views, I should fly from the face of man, and become a hermit at once. I do not pretend to be better than my neighbors, but I do hope I am not such a miscreant as Mr. Harlan and old Jack seem to think."

"Dear father, I fear you misunderstand them both. It is not with respect to the outward life that they speak, but of the heart, from which proceed evil thoughts, and if the fountain is corrupt the streams cannot be pure."

"Then I suppose you will allow that when the streams are pure, the fountain must be pure also. Now for example, what would you say of Willie's heart? Can that be corrupt, while nothing can be more guileless and lovely than his actions?"

"Ah, my dear father, Willie is indeed a beautiful example of what the heart may become when enlightened and purified by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Still, if you ask him what he thinks of the subject, he will tell you that Mr. Harlan's representation is not exaggerated; that it is only by ceaseless watching, and application to the blood of cleansing that he can preserve even an outward conformity to the divine law."

"Well, I can only say that it seems to me nothing less than a fanatical delusion, by which people make themselves miserable for nothing. There was poor Harry again. What an account Mr. Preston gave you of him. A nobler, more magnanimous fellow does not exist. I declare, it makes me angry when I think of it. Why, Sophy, they frightened the boy out of his senses, by their own account, making him believe he was the greatest sinner that ever lived. If I had been there, I should have taken him away. If he had not had more sense than they seem to have possessed, he might never have recovered his reason."

"But what is Harry's opinion of it now, when, as you say, he has recovered his reason?"

"There it is again. That is the worst feature of the case. They seem never to recover from the delusion,

after they have once passed through the process, but remain monomaniacs at least the rest of their lives."

"And yet you would not call them so, if this excitement of mind was caused by making some great discovery in science. Many of the greatest minds that have ever been created have experienced this change, and ever after proclaimed in the face of persecution, torture and death, that the delusion existed before the change, and that now light had broken in upon their minds, such as they had never dreamed of before. Why have so few renounced these views? But, on the contrary, they testify universally, that they never knew what true happiness was before—mourning that so much of their lives had been wasted before they obtained this knowledge. Who has ever been heard to lament that they had tried the service of God, and been disappointed; that it did not bestow the happiness it promised? And how many have bitterly regretted that they did not give it more attention, professing with their dying breath, that it was the only antidote for the sorrows of life? And these are the very persons who complain most of the corruption of their hearts."

Mrs. Bradford stopped, fearing that her father might think she assumed too much in thus addressing him, adding, "But I forget myself, dear father, perhaps I ought not to speak in this way to you."

"Yes, my child, I wish you to speak freely; for if religion is really what you say, an antidote for the sorrows of life, I would willingly sit at your feet to learn it. But oh, Sophy! nothing can heal my wounds. Nothing can restore my lost ones to my aching heart."

Mrs. Bradford repressed her tears, while she responded with animation, "Yes, yes, 'life and immortality are

brought to light by the Gospel.' They are not dead, they live; they wait for our coming in the bright mansions prepared for us all."

"That may comfort you, Sophy; but those mansions are so far off. Dimness, distance and uncertainty, wrap the whole subject. It fails to bring comfort to my desolation."

"But, oh, dearest father, if you would only study the Bible, it would no longer be dim or uncertain to you."

"I have read, and of course heard the Bible, a great deal. There are passages that I always admire, especially in the gospels; but it is generally so obscure that it conveys no meaning to my mind."

"And yet, when you consider that it is the most ancient writing in existence, and intended for the perusal of the whole human race, at all periods of time, and in every condition, how can it be otherwise than obscure, unless its peculiarities of style, and of the times and circumstances in which it was written, are carefully studied? That a book has been written so completely, meeting all these requirements, constitutes to me one of its highest claims to Divine origin."

"I have never doubted that it is an inspired writing."

"Then, dear father, that point being established, the only wise or safe plan for us is to make it the man of our counsel; to sit down with the docility of children to learn what message it brings to us."

"But I am too old now to expect to understand it, if, as is often said, the longest life would not suffice to fathom its depths of meaning."

"It is, indeed, exhaustless. But if you should find a gold mine, would you shut it up and turn your back upon it because you had reason to believe it exhaustless?

All that is necessary for our salvation is so plain, that a child may comprehend it. As regards the more profound parts of its revelations—if we ask for assistance, it will be given. 'Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law,' was the prayer of David, and soon we hear him exclaiming, 'Oh, how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day.' The Saviour himself prayed for his people, 'Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth;' and surely we may use the same petition in our own behalf, with humble confidence that it will be answered. If we find revealed there, that our hearts are utterly depraved, we must receive it as truth, rejoicing that a remedy is provided."

"But how can it be that every heart is depraved, when we see so many whose lives are innocent?"

"I once heard it illustrated in this way from the pulpit, by a very popular preacher. Suppose you were in a dark room: all is quiet and you discern no evil. Presently, a ray of light darts into one corner. You start; for there, coiled up, is a hideous serpent. Another ray reveals a furious tiger, with his glaring eyes, ready to spring upon you. Throw open all the windows, and your place of safety and repose becomes abhorrent to you, as the haunt of all unclean and abominable things. Thus it is with the heart, when the light of the Holy Spirit enters. Well may we cry out, 'Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?' It was such a revelation by the Spirit, that so nearly overwhelmed poor Harry at camp-meeting; but he knew where to seek for help, and found peace by applying to the great Physician of souls, who has promised to cleanse us from our pollutions."

"You have painted a very extreme case, Sophy, I should hope."

"It is a very strong case, I admit, and perhaps few are favored with so clear a view of their condition."

"Favored! I should think it anything but a favor."

"Why, if you had some deep-seated and dangerous disease, would it be the part of friendship to allow you to remain in ignorance of its nature and extent, or even of its existence, when by a timely application to the physician an unfailing remedy could be obtained? Sin, believe me, is the disease of the soul, that with which we are born. There is but one that can heal it. Oh, my father, do not delay. Go to that great Physician, and learn the deadly nature of the disease before it is too late. You commenced your career under the common delusion that this world was to be the theatre of your happiness. You knew that life, at the longest, was but as a morning dream, that we must soon awake to an eternal existence, and yet you sought to lay up your treasures on this unstable earth. Suppose you had been left in possession of them as long as you were capable of enjoying them, and dying, have left this beautiful home, with all its treasured associations, to a son, in every respect the realization of your fondest hopes, and he again to his son; and so on for generations to come. Still each one could occupy but a few years, and then pass away, where earthly names and possessions cannot follow. How much better to secure a title to a name and an inheritance in that kingdom which is eternal, and of which it may be said, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' Now we have the assurance that all our departed ones are safe. Let

us use our few remaining days in preparation for the summons that must soon come to call us from this unsatisfying world, to one where there is no more parting, no more death."

"Oh, Sophy, I wish I could realize it as you do. It might in time reconcile me to the disappointments of life."

"You will realize it, dear father, if you seek for it, to your abundant consolation. And we must thankfully remember that you have still a dear son, who will in all probability live to be a blessing to all connected with him."

"I do not expect it. He is so delicate still. He is like a fair and fragile flower. The first rude blast may tear it from the stem."

"Well, in that event, a crown and a kingdom await him, more glorious than our most ardent love could bestow upon him. Can you not rejoice in that?"

At this moment the subject of the remark rode up, followed by Joe, who led away the horses, while his young master came into the portico. After a few inquiries about the meeting, his sister said, "Come, Willie, you must have had a beautiful ride, and if you are not tired you can sing us a hymn before you go to bed."

"Father, what shall it be? for I know sister Sophy will say I am to ask you."

"I have no choice, my son, I shall like to hear any that you choose."

"Then, Willie, let it be, 'If life's pleasures charm thee.'"

The night was so still, the scene so beautiful as it lay before them, bathed in moonlight, that it seemed only to lack music to make it complete, and Willie's soft,

melodious voice, as it trembled responsive to those exquisite words, seemed to soothe his father's perturbed feelings even more than usual. He sat silent for a few moments after the hymn ceased, and then rising, he put his arms around the gentle boy, whose feeble health and delicate person had caused him to treat him with the same caressing tenderness that he bestowed upon his daughters.

"I thank you for your sweet hymn, my dear boy. It has done me good. Now good night, my children, it is time we were all in bed."

In conversations like the above, Mrs. Bradford had frequent opportunities to bring the truths of the Gospel before the mind of her father, who seemed more willing to receive them from her than from any one else. The vacation at Christmas gave them a short visit from Harry, which served to break up the tediousness of his long absence, for he had become so important a member of the family that all felt it a great privation.

CHAPTER XX.

MANŒUVERING AND PORTRAIT-PAINTING.

"Gallant Sir Ronald,
So debonair;
Of scores of broad roods
Sir Ronald is heir.
And many a fair lady
In secret doth sigh
For a word from Sir Ronald—
A glance from his eye."

When the spring opened, Mrs. Rodney came to her brother's to remain till her own house was ready to receive her. Having found Harry less ready to coöperate with her in her plans than she had hoped, she deemed it necessary to proceed more cautiously, but not with less determination. Accordingly, she said nothing to her niece of her displeasure at the result of the camp-meeting. Her surprise and joy at the improvement in Willie's health were warmly expressed; but when she discovered that he too had united with the Methodist church, her resolution gave way, and indignation burst forth in no measured terms. This she soon found was as great a mistake as the course she had adopted with Harry, for her brother could not endure that any blame should be cast on his beloved daughter or son. They both met her vehement reproaches with so much sweetness and forbearance, that she was at least silenced. So she again smoothed her ruffled plumes, and resorted to more politic measures.

She passed much of her time with her old friend Mrs. Carter, where she could have an eye to the proceedings of George and Virginia, as well as her favorite Rose. She induced them to lend their influence with others, to have another Episcopal church established in the neighborhood, of more evangelical principles. By corresponding with the bishop, she enlisted his sympathy, ever alive to the interests of his diocese, and he sent them a young gentleman of fine abilities, deep piety, and most engaging character. How much of her plans she revealed to her friends is uncertain, but at any rate she won them to enter heart and hand into the measure. They obtained a building for temporary use, and before summer, Mr. Stuart was regularly installed rector of the new parish; and by special request of Mrs. Rodney he became a member of her own family at Glen Cottage.

Her cheerful energetic character had always made her enjoy the society of young people, and her pretty cottage, with its long verandas embowered in roses, honeysuckles and jessamine, became a most attractive spot. Rose she had much of the time with her, and was careful to keep the image of Harry in the most alluring form before her mind; at the same time leaving no means untried to gain Willie's heart. This was not at all difficult, for it was Willie's nature to love everybody. Whoever did wrong, he was the first to find an excuse, or to veil the fault with the tenderest compassion. The kindness of his aunt he reciprocated with all his heart, and was often at Glen Cottage.

Mrs. Rodney sought in every way to raise the spirits of her brother, but he had so long avoided society, that she could not prevail on him to tarry long with her, and Mrs. Bradford was unwilling to leave him alone. This

latter circumstance she did not so much regret; although she really loved her niece, there were so many points on which they could not harmonize, that much of her energy, in carrying out her plans, was cramped by her presence.

Mr. Stuart proved a great blessing to the neighborhood, by his active pastoral oversight, as well as by his pious and instructive pulpit ministrations. In the most accidental manner, Mrs. Rodney permitted him to hear a few observations indicating that she expected Rose Carter eventually to become the wife of Harry Bradford; and that, without really violating the truth, for so ardent were her wishes for that consummation of her plans, that it seemed to her impossible they could be frustrated.

Harry was so frequently the theme of her praises, that Mr. Stuart laughingly proclaimed his imagination so excited about her paragon, that if he fell in any degree short of absolute perfection, he should be disappointed. Then she endeavored to qualify her remarks by saying that he was not by any means perfect, that he was a wayward, perverse boy, and had displeased her very much by becoming a Methodist.

"Still, my dear sir," she continued, "we expect much from your influence over him. Do not let your expectations be raised so high as to end in disappointment. I wish you of all things to gain his friendship, so that you may assist us in winning him back to the church of his fathers."

"Was he baptized in the Episcopal church, Mrs. Rodney?"

"No, I am sorry to say, he was not. But I always feel that he was a member by birth."

Mr. Stuart smiled at this remark, but was prevented

from replying by the sudden appearance of Charlie Carter at the window, saying,

"I know you are speaking of Harry Bradford, but I think you had better let him alone, Mrs. Rodney. You will not mend him by making any change."

"I am sorry to hear you, a Carter, say that it would be no improvement for a Methodist to become an Episcopalian, Charlie," said Mrs. Rodney, as the young man bounded in through the clustering roses.

"I am glad you are come," said Mr. Stuart; "I hope you will give me your opinion of this same Harry Bradford, who is the theme of every tongue, for Mrs. Rodney's views change so rapidly, that I cannot make up my opinion."

"Really, Mr. Stuart, that is a grave charge, and I shall not allow Charlie to reply till he tells me why his sister did not come with him."

"I left her and Sue Allington, about a quarter of a mile back, with Will Hunter. He met us as he was coming from Woodbury. They all fell to botanizing by the road-side, so, as I have no fancy for that business, I walked on. They will be here soon, I suppose."

"Very well, now you may answer Mr. Stuart."

"Let me see. What do I think of Harry Bradford? Oh, I think he is a capital fellow."

"But that is too general. Do favor me with a minute description of his person, mind and manners."

"I will try to oblige you, sir. He is tall—I should think as tall as Col. Hunter—and—ah, here are the girls and Will—they can paint his likeness better than I can. But I know he is a fine fellow, and everybody likes him."

The girls came in with their hands full of flowers,

which they poured into Mrs. Rodney's lap. She kissed them both, and sending for water, proceeded to arrange them in vases, with Susan's assistance.

But Mr. Stuart persisted, and applied to Rose for an answer to his questions. Thus called upon, after some pretty blushing and hesitation, she said that Harry was certainly very handsome; his eyes were of a "deep, bright, and most expressive blue." Then, as she remembered the next lines of the song, she glanced at Mr. Stuart. By his arch expression, she saw that he had caught the idea, and she blushed again, while he went on with the quotation:

> "'Between me and the midnight heaven arise,
> Oftener than any eyes I ever knew.'

Do they, Miss Carter?"

Rose sprang away, denying any such inference. Mrs. Rodney, enjoying her confusion, told Susan she would leave her to finish the arrangement of the flowers, and as the subject was evidently so embarrassing to some of the company, she would gratify Mr. Stuart's curiosity herself.

"You have already heard," she commenced, "that Harry is tall, and his eyes are blue. They are; but so dark, that with thick dark eyebrows and lashes, they often look black. He has a noble head, which is placed and carried in a most lofty and aristocratic manner"——

"Oh, Aunt Rodney!" interrupted Willie.

"Stop, Willie, do not interrupt me. That is his greatest beauty, in my opinion. His forehead is high, full and white, in fine contrast with his wavy, dark brown

hair, and somewhat embrowned and ruddy cheek. Nose, straight and rather slender—teeth, very fine—Mouth, well-formed, and expressive of firmness combined with great sweetness of disposition, both of which traits he certainly possesses in an eminent degree. His mind, his friends and teachers consider of a high order. He will probably graduate first in his class. Taste refined and cultivated—manners easy, courteous and dignified—perhaps generally too sedate for his years. Now, Willie, if I have not drawn a faithful picture, you are at liberty to speak."

Willie laughed, saying, "I should like to add a touch or two to your picture. You say he carries his head loftily, and so he does, but it is not because he is in the least haughty, for the moment he speaks or smiles, the loftiness vanishes in the most delightful gentleness and deference for others, and his smile possesses a charm that everybody feels—it is so cheering. Then it does not seem to me he is so very sedate; he is always cheerful, and frequently joyous in his mood."

"Very well, my dear, I am satisfied with your additions to my picture; and now, Mr. Stuart, what do you think of our Harry?"

Mr. Stuart's keen observation had not failed to remark the varying color and tremulous fingers of the unobtrusive Susan, while the description proceeded, and as she was placing the vases on the mantel, he turned to her, answering:

"I must not make up my mind till I hear all the testimony. Miss Allington, can you add to, or detract from this description of your friend?"

Susan smiled, but feeling the color flash over her cheek, she consciously turned away her face, saying that

she could not think of adding her unskillful touch to the work of artists so superior.

Mr. Stuart noticed for a moment the changing color, and downcast eye, and thought within himself that perhaps there might be more than one claimant for the regard of this admired young man, and wondered how that would suit Mrs. Rodney. These suspicions were strengthened when the next morning the poor flowers were seen hanging their fair heads, without a drop of water in the vases. He made no comment, but his kind interest deepened in the uncertain future of these lovely young persons, and he could not but wish that they all indeed belonged to his own flock. At any rate, he felt that he could not be an uninterested spectator of the changing developing scenes in which they would be called to act.

As the time drew near for Harry's long vacation, Mrs. Rodney's solicitude increased, to make the renewed intercourse of Harry and Rose tend to the furtherance of her darling schemes. Various plans were adopted and again abandoned. One very desirable point to gain was that of preventing Willie from going to camp-meeting; for she could not but own that his health was vastly improved and his mind strengthening and expanding under the management of his sister.

Still it was by no means certain, that his life could be long. She thus had to watch over both him and Harry, not knowing which would be the important individual. Again, her wakeful observation warned her to keep the fair and gentle Susan as much in the background as possible.

Finally, she settled upon a trip to Niagara. Her brother, she knew, could not be induced to leave home.

Mrs. Bradford needed some change, and as she would not consent to so long a separation from Harry, she must go. Harry and Rose of course; they were the principal characters in the party. Willie had often expressed a wish to see the Falls. So whether his health was benefited by the trip, or the attachment between Harry and Rose strengthened, something would be accomplished. Her spirits rose at the prospect.

The Allingtons were not in affluent circumstances and Mrs. Rodney made her arrangements on so extensive a scale that she knew there was no danger of Susan's going, even if the others should desire it. Mr. Stuart could not leave his parish in its infancy, and then it would work well for him to pass the time of her absence at the Lodge with her brother, especially if George and Virginia were there.

CHAPTER XXI.

REVERSES AND PARTINGS.

"I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching wise—
To meet the glad with cheerful smile,
And to wipe the weeping eyes;
And a heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathize."

BRIEF as was the time before the close of the college term, events of considerable importance to the development of our story intervened. After a short but violent illness, Mr. Allington died. As his only son was recently married, it was considered best for him to remove from a small farm that he had received as the portion of his wife, and immediately enter upon the management of his paternal estate of Forestdale, renting the one he had previously occupied.

The young wife was, unfortunately, not in every respect such a person as Mrs. Allington and Susan could harmonize with. Gay and fashionable, without much depth of character, she stepped into the position which Mrs. Allington had long and happily occupied, without that delicate tact and tenderness for the wounded heart of her predecessor that might have softened the change. She was continually saying or doing something, without really intending it, that jarred upon the feelings of the bereaved wife and daughter. Mrs. Allington gave up her place to her thoughtless daughter-in-law, with the ut-

most sweetness, but the sudden and entire privation of active duties and cares at a time when the responsibilities of the household might have withdrawn her thoughts in some degree from her loss, was too much for her spirits, and she would perhaps have sunk under the sorrow, had not her daughters Mrs. Austen and Mrs. Herbert both urged her to make her home with them. She had never visited the latter, and as the change would thus be more complete, it was decided that she and Susan should leave for Staunton at an early date.

At this position of affairs, Harry came home. Not all the attractions of Glen Cottage, though combined with the affectionate urgency of its mistress, could prevent him from making his first visit to his afflicted friends at Forestdale. Susan saw him as he approached the house, and hastened to meet him with a glow of pleasure, such as she had not known since her father's death. But as soon as she met his softened eyes, the glow faded. The words "Oh, Harry, I am so glad!" ended in a burst of tears. Covering her face with her hands, she turned away, ashamed of her weakness, for she remembered having heard him say, he disliked tears that were ever flowing at trifles. But these were not, in his opinion, tears of that kind.

"Dear Susie," he said, as he drew her to a sofa, "you would not turn away from your brother Harry in your hour of sorrow, would you?"

This was more than she could resist, and she leaned her head on the arm of the sofa, and wept in silence. A ·t space was all that she would allow herself for this ·ence, and yet thought can accomplish much in a nents. She thought of Harry, the pleasant com- ° her childhood, when he used to call her Lily.

Then the cherished scenes of the camp-meeting passed rapidly before her. She felt that he was changed, and yet the same. The sparkling buoyancy of early youth was giving place to a chastened benignant gravity. The seal of a noble Christian manhood was on his brow, and she felt, rather than thought, that he was one on whose uprightness and strength the weak might lean. Without any definite application of the idea to herself, she was calmed and comforted.

Seeing that the excess of her emotion was past, Harry said, as he passed his hand over the soft glossy hair that reposed near him, "Come, my sister, look up and tell me how your dear mother bears this sad stroke. Like a Christian, I am sure."

Susan raised her head, and trying to smile, answered, "She does indeed, Harry; she seems so submissive, so willing to kiss the rod. And yet it is a sore trial. You know, Lucinda is young and thoughtless. She means to be very kind, but then she does not understand mother's feelings, and perhaps we are morbidly sensitive just now." She stopped embarrassed, fearing she had said too much.

Harry easily read her thoughts, and hastened to change the conversation by asking when they were to leave for Staunton.

"As soon as Mr. Herbert returns from Richmond. He will be here, I suppose, next week, and Hattie is very anxious to have us with her. We all think it will be better for mother to go away as soon as possible."

"I do not doubt it will be the best arrangement, and though Aunt Rodney has set her heart on our going to Niagara, we shall lose but a few days of your company."

"Do you not wish to go, Harry? I used to think I

would rather go to Niagara, than to any place I ever heard of."

"Yes; I wish to go, but just now, Susie, I feel more like trying to comfort you and your mother."

Susan looked up with a grateful smile, but dared not trust her voice. Harry resumed, "It is very kind of Aunt Rodney to plan this trip for my mother and Willie. I know they both need something of the kind. But I should like to be in several places at the same time, if I could. I was absent from home so much of the last long vacation, that I hoped to spend more time with my grandfather this summer. I wish he could go with us."

"Can you not persuade him, Harry? I think he needs it as much as any one."

"I know he does; but he is immovable. There is not the least probability that he will ever leave home again, unless compelled by business."

A servant now came to say that Mrs. Allington would like to see Harry, so they went to her room. She received her young friend very affectionately, and after a brief effort to compose her features, entered into conversation with him on his own interests—the college—the health of all at Hunter's Lodge, etc.—but did not seem inclined to allude to her late bereavement. She spoke of her intended journey and the pleasure she anticipated in seeing her daughter and her little boy. Perceiving that the shock was too recent for her to have recovered from its effects enough to enjoy conversation, he took leave, promising to see them again before they left.

Mr. Allington had recently entered into some land speculations which had resulted in considerable pecuniary loss. Forestdale, though linked to the hearts of its owners by a thousand ties of pleasant association, was a

small place and not likely to yield a support for the family of its present proprietor together with Mrs. Allington and Susan, without better management and economy than Richard and his young wife were likely to practise. Mr. Austen and Mr. Herbert had always manifested the dutiful affection of sons for Mrs. Allington, but still the change from independence to dependence was painful. She had so long been accustomed to easy circumstances, with an indulgent husband to lean upon, and a home adorned by her own refined taste, where she could receive her children as her guests. Then, the servants—the poor servants—were almost as much afflicted as she was, to find themselves passing with the old homestead into such inexperienced hands, and their lamentations were only restrained within the bounds of moderation by the sympathy and respect which they felt for their beloved mistress.

Mrs. Allington possessed a small patrimony that would be sufficient for her support and that of Susan if they lived with her daughters. Richard and Lucinda both protested against such a decision, declaring that their house was the most proper home for them. Susan knew that her mother must at any rate change the scene for the present, and then they could more calmly decide on the future.

All these particulars Harry had, from time to time, learned from his mother, and now slowly retraced his steps homeward, sad and thoughtful, for it was painfully apparent that Forestdale was no longer a home for his friends.

He found Mrs. Rodney and Mr. Stuart with the family. They passed a pleasant hour together, though Harry vainly tried to banish from his thoughts the sad

pale faces he had parted from, so strongly contrasted by their mournful dresses. Mrs. Rodney was in fine spirits, for her most sanguine expectations were realized in the evident pleasure the two young men appeared to take in each other's conversation. When she heard them make an appointment to ride together in the morning to inspect the site of Mr. Stuart's new church, she almost doubted whether it would not have been better to remain at home, that the favorable impression might ripen into intimacy, especially as the Allingtons were going away. But then she dreaded the effect of another camp-meeting, and as the excursion was all arranged, it could not well be given up. So, to Niagara she resolved to go.

The evening before they were to start, Col. Hunter retired early to his room, and sent for Harry to come to him. He held out his hand as his grandson entered. It was manifest that something agitated him more than ordinarily, for he did not speak for some moments after Harry took the chair beside him. At last, fixing his eyes on him with great affection, while his features quivered with emotion, he commenced.

"Harry, my boy" ——

He was unable to proceed. But the blood of Virginia was too strong in him to yield, so he plunged into the other extreme, and clearing his voice, resumed in a tone of sternness unusual with him:

"Harry, I wish to talk with you before" ——

Another pause, and by a strong effort of will he went on in a more natural manner:

"The fact is, my son, life is so uncertain to us all, that I wish to say a few words to you before you leave home. I am an old man now, and may be taken away at any

time. Willie will never"—a slight faltering of the voice, but he conquered and proceeded firmly. "I must live to see the last Hunter die. That is my fate. I have long felt sure of it. It cannot be long, and you will be master of Hunter Lodge."

"Oh, no, grandfather, that cannot be. You may be spared to us many years, and by that time, Willie, who is so vastly improved in health now, will be entirely able to attend to his own affairs. This journey will be of great service to him, and you will all live happily together."

"Harry, do not interrupt me. I have much to say. I want you to promise me that, when we are gone, you will keep the servants together. Make them comfortable. Don't let them forget their old master."

After looking out of the window awhile, and apparently studying the sinking crescent of the moon, he turned again to his silent grandson.

"Harry, there is one other point that I have long been desiring to mention to you. The name of Hunter must become extinct unless you—Harry you are a very young man now, but some time or other you will marry—I hope you will, and have sons, like yourself, Harry; for you are a great blessing to me."

Here Col. Hunter grasped the hand of his grandson, and looking in his face with deep earnestness, he continued:

"Harry, if you should be blessed with sons—will you not let one bear the name of his old grandfather? Let there be one more David Hunter to inherit the estate of his fathers."

He stopped, and for a few moments both were too much affected to speak. At length, Harry recovered voice enough to say solemnly—

"I promise, with God's help, to do all you wish in these circumstances, dear grandfather; but I beg of you to take a more hopeful view of the future. I cannot for a moment believe there is any danger of my being placed in that position. I would not for the world it should be so."

"Oh, Harry, you do not know. But you have promised; you will keep your word, and I am satisfied. God bless you, my dear boy. Good night."

CHAPTER XXII.

GREAT OUTLAY FOR SMALL GAINS.

"Untiringly she spread her snares,
And like a siren lured the prey;
But all her toils and all her cares,
But scared the wary prize away.
She sung, she smiled, she thrilled, she charmed,
She shot her magic darts;—in vain.
A *something* kept him still unharmed,
And free from love's enthralling chain."

The long expected journey commenced. Baltimore was the first stopping-place, where they tarried but a few days with Mrs. Rodney, for the weather was so extremely warm that Willie became languid, and they hastened on, hoping that the cooler northern breezes would invigorate him.

The change from the quiet uneventful life that he had pursued at home, was too great. Everything was so new that the excitement frequently prevented him from sleeping. The grandeur and beauty of the ever-changing scenes on the North River, kept him in a constant state of ecstatic enjoyment, that could only find expression in poetry or song. His interesting appearance, and artless enthusiasm made him an attractive object to the passengers, who soon produced a guitar, and he was induced to sing frequently. Altogether it was more than his delicate organization could bear; and when they reached Albany, the reaction was so extreme that Mrs. Bradford insisted upon several days of entire seclusion

and rest. Mrs. Rodney, with Rose and Harry, passed the time in excursions about the city and country. This interval of repose was almost as needful for Mrs. Bradford as for Willie, and it was not till the fourth day that they were sufficiently recruited to proceed.

The first day spent at the Falls again nearly overpowered Willie, but by lying down after dinner and listening to the quiet tones of his sister as she read to him, he became more tranquil, and could afterwards enjoy the wonders of the place without so much exciting the fears of his friends. The overwhelming sublimity of these mighty scenes, "in nature's morning made," began to exert a soothing influence. He viewed them with the lines of Brainard in his mind and on his lips. They spoke of "Him who poured the waters from his hollow hand, who chronicled the ages back, and notched his centuries in the eternal rocks," till he was enabled to rest in his own littleness. He never wearied of standing on the bridge that crosses the Rapids to Bath Island, losing himself in wonder and delight at the wild turmoil of the foaming, tumbling waters; or wandering from one fairy island to another, sometimes lying down under the trees in view of the cataract, watching the deepening and vanishing hues of the rainbow, as it hung in beauty upon the mist; then turning to find companionship in the little meek flowers that never cease to tremble at the terrible voice of the "Thunder of Waters."

The day before their departure Mrs. Rodney, Rose and Harry passed over to the islands, so early as to avoid the throng of visitors, and enjoy an uninterrupted walk among these surpassing scenes. They strayed about and lingered a while on Goat Island, till Rose, declaring herself tired, sat down on a mossy rock, while Mrs. Rod-

ney and Harry continued their stroll to Luna Island for another look at the American fall. All was still save Niagara's mighty voice. Rose amused herself gathering wild flowers and weaving them with delicate ferns into her dark hair, when she was startled by a voice, almost a shriek, from the thick foliage of Moss Island near which she was sitting.

"Edith, Edith, my beloved, hast thou come at last to heal my broken heart?"

And a youthful but wasted form sprung upon the bridge with outstretched arms and glowing eyes fixed upon the terrified girl. Just as he touched the shore, and had nearly reached the spot where she sat paralyzed with the suddenness of the shock, she recovered her energies and flew along the path in the direction taken by her friends, vainly calling them by name, till she saw them leisurely returning, at some distance. Then feeling that she was safe, she sunk completely exhausted on the ground.

Greatly alarmed they hurried to her, but she was incapable of giving a connected recital of the strange adventure, and they only gathered from her incoherent words something about a man rushing out of the trees, and a breathless entreaty to be taken back to the hotel. Half leading, half carrying, they brought her as far as the Toll-house, where they rested awhile, and she gave them a more intelligible account of her alarm. Here from the keepers of the house they learned the existence of the Hermit of the Falls, of whom they had never before heard.

As soon as the ladies were safely deposited in their rooms, Harry eagerly retraced his steps to Moss Island. Stealthily he crossed the miniature bridge, and gazed

around for some trace of the unfortunate man. Nothing was to be seen, but he paused, unwilling to depart without some further knowledge of the interesting recluse. As he stood in deep thought, his eyes fell on what appeared to be a case, such as usually incloses a miniature. He hastily caught it up, and as it fell open in his hand. he beheld the features of a fair girl, scarcely past childhood, and strange to say, bearing a marked resemblance to Rose.

Here then the mystery was unravelled. The young man had traced the likeness in Rose to the picture, and in his warped delirious imagination had fancied her the living reality of his lost Edith. More than ever interested now to restore the picture, Harry penetrated still deeper into the leafy bower, till his cautious steps were arrested by a low moaning sound that seemed close to his side. He paused in breathless agitation, for the romance of the adventure had completely taken him captive. Still amid the roar of the cataract, he surely heard the deep utterance of human woe. As he put aside the branches of the trees, in the direction from which the sound came, he caught a view of the unhappy youth, prostrate on the earth, his face buried in his hands, and convulsively breathing forth those expressions of anguish that had so deeply moved his unseen auditor.

Harry doubted whether to indulge his own sympathy by speaking to him, or to leave the picture near him and retire unnoticed. But at that moment, roused perhaps by some involuntary motion of Harry's, the young man started to his feet, and in an angry tone demanded who it was that thus dared to intrude upon his solitude.

Harry was about to explain, as he extended the picture towards him. Quick as lightning he snatched it and thrusting it into his bosom fiercely exclaimed—

"Would you rob me of my only treasure?"

Then, as the sight of it seemed to soften him, he leaned against a tree, adding in faltering accents, with a glance of melancholy appeal, "Go, go, and leave me alone in the only peace that remains for me."

"But my friend," responded Harry, "I would rather stay and talk with you of that world where sorrow finds a balm, and where friends are no more parted."

"No, no, there is no such world." Then resuming his wild eager manner he continued: "Can you bless me again with the fair vision that was just now snatched from me? If you can I will thank you on my knees. But no, it was only a dream and has passed away forever. Be gone! The sight of man maddens me. Leave me—to die—alone."

His agitation increased to such a degree that Harry hesitated whether it was safe to leave him alone; but as he still insisted upon his absence he reluctantly returned to the hotel. From all the information he could gain there, it appeared that the hermit had rarely been known to hold intercourse with any one. That he was gentle and inoffensive, but shunned the presence of man. The paroxysm of feeling that Harry had witnessed, was an occurrence heretofore unknown.

When Harry returned, he learned that Rose was sleeping. She awaked quite recovered from the effects of her fright, and prepared to listen with the other ladies to Harry's account of his interview with the hermit. Nothing was said to Willie respecting this singu-

lar incident till some time after his return home, when he could be interested without being agitated by the recital.

In the evening Mrs. Rodney and Harry again visited the islands, not without the hope on the lady's part of catching a glimpse of the hermit, but it was in vain. They saw him no more, and the next morning left Niagara.

The next points of destination in the plans of Mrs. Rodney were Saratoga and the sea-shore. The former was abandoned, not without a remonstrance from Rose, on account of Willie, who was evidently unfit to encounter its bewildering gaieties. The latter might be expected to act as a restorative for his debilitated nerves, if a retired spot could be found away from fashionable resort. Such a place was found, but the shock of surf bathing proved quite as injurious as the exhilaration of company and fine scenery. So nothing remained but to turn their faces homeward.

Poor Mrs. Rodney, though too proud to betray the fact to others, bitterly acknowledged to herself that the journey from which she had expected so much, was an utter failure. If Willie's health could have been permanently established, that of course would have been the shortest path to the accomplishment of her ardent wishes. But alas! she could not deny that it was far otherwise. This again threw her back to Harry, and all her fine expectations of bringing him under the spell of Rose's continual presence, were chilled by finding him most provokingly willing to consign her to the escort of Willie when he was able to move about, while he was most dutifully attentive to his mother and herself.

Acquaintances of some of the party were frequently met with, and the beauty of Rose gained her attention wherever she was seen. This, with her too evident willingness to receive the homage of her admirers, so far from exciting Harry's jealousy, only called forth the expression of his fraternal solicitude, lest her remarkable personal charms should prove a snare too potent for her unwary feet. It troubled him, that she appeared quite elated by the effect of her appearance on the Hermit, willingly permitting the incident to be discussed in her intercourse with comparative strangers, complacently listening to their flattering deductions, and considering herself quite the heroine of a romance.

So the whole party, with the exception of Rose, returned home, ready to respond to the assertion of Byron, that "No one must expect to enjoy himself, when he goes a pleasuring:" Willie, exhausted and longing for rest; Mrs. Bradford with anxious forebodings on his account; Harry feeling that as the trip had failed to benefit the health of either of them, it had been so much abstracted from his preparation for the great work to which he looked with hope and fear; Mrs. Rodney, with ill-concealed chagrin, that nothing had been accomplished by her well-laid plans, Rose by her vanity and giddiness, having rather repelled than attracted Harry.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHAT IS DUTY?

"And while I thought on these, as given to me,
My trial tests of faith and love to be,
It seemed as if I never could be sure,
That faithful to the end I should endure.
And thus no longer trusting to His might,
Who says, 'We walk by faith and not by sight,'
Doubting, and almost yielding to despair,
The thought arose, 'My cross I cannot bear.'"

WHAT remained of the vacation glided away in peaceful home enjoyments. Mrs. Rodney found some consolation in the mutual regard manifested by Harry and Mr. Stuart, and she repeatedly urged the latter to use all his influence to bring her nephew into *the church*. But while, friendship having ripened by their frequent intercourse, Mr. Stuart would have gladly gratified himself as well as Mrs. Rodney by so doing, he knew that all effort would be unavailing, as Harry's most ardent affections were fastened upon the church of his choice, and he became daily more and more earnest in his desire to—

"Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
Behold, behold the Lamb!"

But painful apprehensions of a far different destiny now began to overshadow his hopes. Col. Hunter's health had been for some years slowly but steadily giving way, and now Willie's utter want of mental and

physical stamina, to meet emergencies and unusual requirements, had been proved by their late journey; and should the management of so large an estate, with all its cares and labors, devolve upon him, he began to ask himself if it would not be his duty to stand by him and at least share the burden, especially as, in the event of Willie's death, the welfare of these servants, for time and eternity, would be required at his hands. What could he do? Which was the path of duty? His ardent desire was to preach the Gospel. Could he disregard the solemn voice that continually spoke in tones of authority, "Go preach my Gospel?" Could he, after putting his hand to the plough, look back? No, he dared not.

Then he must meet the alternative. He must see his beloved Willie, that gentle confiding boy, who had long leaned upon him as an elder brother, sinking, sinking under a burden too heavy for him to bear; and those helpless beings, so soon perhaps in the providence of God, to be intrusted to his own care, exposed to the merciless exactions, perhaps the lash of a hireling overseer. Should the slender thread of Willie's life be sundered, he must himself at once enter upon this joyless inheritance. He had early imbibed his father's sentiments on the subject of slavery, and his very heart ached with the thought of such an alternative. Again he asked himself, what should he do? and again the voice seemed to answer, "Go preach my Gospel."

This deep thoughtfulness had not escaped his mother's watchful eye. She longed for his confidence, but would not urge it, feeling sure that it would come in due time. Accordingly she was not surprised, as he followed her into her room one night, to hear him say, with a face full of

perplexity, that he wished to converse with her on some subjects that had recently troubled his mind. She answered by putting her arms round his neck, and saying:

"Thank you, my dear boy, for I have been feeling very anxious about you since your return."

"Have you, mother? Why so?"

"Ah, my dear Harry, do you suppose that I have been blind to the fact, that something was pressing heavily on your mind?"

"Why, mother! I did not imagine my thoughts could be read so easily."

"Neither could they, my son, by any one probably, but your mother. But come, sit down and tell me what has cast so deep a shadow upon your young brow."

"Mother, I do not see how I am ever to enter the ministry, and yet I believe that the Spirit is continually calling me to it."

"What is the obstacle in your way, my son?"

"Oh, mother, do you not see that grandfather is fast wearing out, and that Willie, even if he outlives him, is utterly unequal to the task of managing this farm and all these negroes?"

"Yes, I have long seen it."

"Then, what am I to do? Can I leave Willie to bear the burden alone, especially after grandfather so solemnly and affectingly committed them all to me, before we went to Niagara? I did not then see it in this strong light, because I fully believed that Willie was gradually recovering his health, and that I should never be called to occupy a position from which my very soul shrinks. How can I ever become a slaveholder? Mother, I cannot—I dare not," and he walked the floor in a state of extreme agitation.

His mother had never seen him so moved before. She went to him, and again put her arms round him, saying:

"Do not distress yourself in this way, my beloved child. Let us look at this subject calmly together, in the light of Christian duty. Let us seek to find out the path in which God calls you to walk, and depend upon it, that is the only safe or happy one for you. If it is his will to deny you the honor and happiness of proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation through a crucified Redeemer, you must submit and learn to say with your Master, who pleased not himself, 'Not my will, but thine be done.' Still, I do not yet see that you must, of necessity, be tried in this way. Let us first seek for light and submission in our evening prayer."

Harry had been accustomed, since camp-meeting, to lead in the evening devotion, when with his mother, and feeling already calmed, in some degree, under the influence of her steady mind, he took the Bible and read a chapter. In his prayer his urgent petition was, at first, that the way might be opened for him to occupy some humble place on the walls of Zion. But as he proceeded, the sense of his own insufficiency came over his spirit, bringing it down in sweet submission to the foot of the cross, and he arose from his knees, prepared to say, "What wilt Thou have me to do?"

After a pause of some moments, Mrs. Bradford resumed the conversation. "It seems to me, Harry, that you have been making yourself unhappy without sufficient cause. Your grandfather's life, I earnestly hope, may be prolonged for many years, and in that case, Willie will be exempt from care, and may continue at least as well as he has been. This journey, I must acknowledge, has resulted in a way that I did not expect;

but I still hope to see him restored by a return to his usual mode of life."

"Oh, that it may indeed be so. But, dear mother, you do not think it wrong for me to consider all these probabilities before I enter upon my last year at college, that I may the better prepare myself to meet them?"

"No, certainly not."

"Then if I should ever come into possession of these servants, is there any way in which I could dispose of them? Would they consent to go to Liberia, do you think?"

"I fear not, my son. The death of so many of Mr. Lawson's people seems to have prejudiced them against the idea. I have often heard them say that nothing would induce them to go, if they could help it."

Harry sighed at the renunciation of that hope, and said, "Well, I hope if I am ever so unfortunate as to own them, that there will be a change in the laws of the State, so that *I*, as well as *they*, may be free."

"But, Harry, if it is the will of your heavenly Father to place these helpless beings in your hands, it is because he requires you to take care of them till he puts it in your power to liberate them. At present, we see that to be impossible and must submit. In the meantime, you and I may be the first to leave the world."

"I have often thought of that, and for an instant derived comfort from the idea. But then the poor creatures might pass into the hands of those who would not feel as much interested in them as we do; so that I would rather meet all the trials of owning them myself, than that they should be separated and carried away by different owners."

"Yes, that should reconcile you, for you know if you

shrink from the duty that God lays upon you, you take the responsibility of all the results forever. But if you, so far as it is made known to you, obey the will of God, he assumes the responsibility of the results, whatever they may be. I believe it would be a sore affliction to them, if you were to put them out of your own hands. The present duty is all we have to attend to, and you have only to go quietly on with your studies, till you graduate, and then if, as we fervently hope, there is no change, you will lay all these possibilities before your presiding elder, and offer yourself to the conference."

"But the idea of entering the itinerancy, and then because of receiving a large estate, locating and sitting down at ease, to rust out. Oh, mother, I cannot bear to think of it. What a reproach it would cast on the cause of Methodism—of religion itself."

"But my dear Harry, these circumstances are not of your own choosing. They are of divine appointment, and you must take reproach if it is found in the path of duty. Neither will it be at all necessary for you to rust out. There will be enough for you to do among the souls committed to your care, and besides, destitute places, for you to preach in. I do not think you are one to rust out."

"I do not feel much like it just now, but so many have done so under similar circumstances. How can I expect to resist temptation better than they?"

"Forewarned is forearmed, you know, and if you are now permitted to see the danger, you must pray constantly for the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand in that trial, or whatever may be appointed for you."

Harry rose to say "good night," and clasping his mother in his arms, he uttered a fervent thanksgiving for

the blessing of such a mother; which was as fervently responded to by her heart, for the blessing of such a son, and they separated.

Willie recovered from the effects of his fatigue and excitement, so far as to allay in some measure the apprehensions of his sister and Harry, but not so far as to satisfy the ambitious views of Mrs. Rodney, and while she felt great tenderness for him as an interesting boy, she failed to discern the noble qualities of his heart; and still vainly coveted for the proprietorship of Hunter's Lodge, the manly form and mind of Harry. This one absorbing passion of her soul deprived her of comfort, save as her hopes predominated over her fears.

Harry returned to college, and the first event that ruffled the calm of Hunter's Lodge, was the sudden illness of Col. Hunter. The family were just rising from dinner, and as he still kept his seat, Willie in passing stopped to ask him a question. He did not reply, and this attracted Mrs. Bradford's attention. They soon found that he was unable to speak, Willie sank faint and breathless on the sofa, and in great alarm, Mrs. Bradford gave directions for carrying her father to his bed, as he was not able to walk, and for Doctor Torrence to be summoned as well as Mrs. Rodney. By this time Willie had rallied, and when the doctor and Mrs. Rodney arrived the Colonel was so far recovered as to be able to speak imperfectly. He seemed conscious of his situation, and entirely composed. Doctor Torrence pronounced the attack paralysis, but very slight, and by no means dangerous, unless succeeded by others of the same nature. In a few days he was able to walk with the assistance of a cane, and to converse without difficulty, though with a less distinct enunciation.

Of all these events as they transpired, Harry was duly informed by his mother, and deeply they pondered them in their hearts, waiting in meekness to learn the will of the great Disposer of events.

Rose passed the most of the winter with her sister in Baltimore, and Mrs. Rodney, sometimes in that city and sometimes in Glen Cottage, watched and schemed as usual.

Winter passed and spring came. Col. Hunter continued in nearly his usual health. Willie seemed to have regained the strength he lost in travelling, and Harry was steadily pressing on towards the end of his college course. Mrs. Bradford had long treasured in her maternal breast the hope of being present at Harry's last commencement; but she knew if Willie did not go, his disappointment would be very great, and if he did, his own fervent desire to pursue the same course might re-awaken regrets that had long been kept in subjection by Christian resignation. So, in consideration of his health and comfort, with her wonted self-renouncing affection, she did not mention the subject.

Harry took the first honors of his class, and left Carlisle beloved and respected by faculty and students. One circumstance that relieved much of his perplexity, in view of offering himself to the conference was that Mr. Preston was now living in Woodbury as presiding elder. He would act as a father to him, advising and assisting him in explaining the peculiarities of his case to the bishop. At the urgent request of his friends, he said nothing about leaving home at present, only occasionally going with Mr. Preston to his appointments.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WILLIE'S CAMP-MEETING.

"The groves were God's first temples. . . .
. . . . . Ah, why
Should we, in the world's riper years, neglect
God's ancient sanctuaries, and adore
Only among the crowd, and under roofs
That our frail hands have raised!"

BRYANT.

ONE evening, as the family at Hunter's Lodge were sitting on the portico after tea, the well-known carryall of Mr. Preston was seen approaching the house. All were glad to see him, for his true piety and kindliness of disposition had gained the respect of the whole neighborhood. Col. Hunter welcomed him with the cordial hospitality of old Virginia, and called the ever-ready Pete to take the horse. But Mr. Preston stopped him, saying:

"No, thank you; I am here only for a few moments, to say that I start for the Court House to-morrow morning, and should like to have you go with me, Harry, if these friends can spare you."

Harry looked at his mother, who smiled and said:

"Certainly, if you wish it, Harry. You are old enough now to act for yourself, without looking to your mother."

"Don't tell him so, Sister Bradford; keep him under the influence of your eye as long as you can. Let him

think he must not go or come without your sanction. These boys are ready enough to slip the leading strings."

Mrs. Bradford and Willie laughed, as well as Harry, at this new phase of his character, while she said:

"I believe I can trust him, especially as you will have the oversight of him. If he is disposed to be very riotous or rebellious, you will let me know."

Col. Hunter said he hoped he would not stay long; but Willie was not quite so ready to give him up.

"I do not think I can consent quite so willingly, Mr. Preston. Harry has been at home but a few weeks, and I believe you have had him to yourself almost half the time."

"But stay, Willie, I have not yet told you all my plan. I have a quarterly meeting next Sabbath at Cool Spring, and then I must be at the Elmwood camp-meeting"——

"Oh!" interrupted Willie, springing from his seat in great animation, "how I should like to go!"

"That is just what I was thinking of. I want you and Sister Bradford to meet me and Harry there, as soon after the twenty-fifth as you please. How would that suit you?"

"It would suit me exactly. And, Sister Sophy, you will go, won't you?"

"I must think about it, Willie, and talk with father before I decide. You remember how very much you were fatigued last summer."

"Yes, but this is so near home that I could return at any time. Father, you do not think it would be imprudent for me to go, do you? And it is so long since Sister Sophy has been at camp-meeting, I know she would be delighted to go, only she never thinks of herself."

"Well, you will have time to decide, and let me hear from you at Brother Guilford's by the twenty-third. That will be in time for us to make all needful arrangements, if you conclude to go. Harry, what do you say? Shall I call for you at six o'clock?"

"Yes, sir, if I can render you any assistance."

"Plenty of it—plenty of it. There is something of a revival in those neighborhoods just now, and we shall want all the help we can get. I do not intend you shall be an idler, by any means."

Mr. Preston soon took leave, and the remainder of the evening was spent in discussing the pro and con of the camp-meeting. Col. Hunter yielded to Willie's urgent entreaties, and, though gloomy forebodings mingled with his desire to gratify him, he found it impossible to resist his joyful anticipations.

Mrs. Bradford and Harry were more deliberate in making up their decision, but at the last came to the conclusion that the severity of his disappointment might have as injurious an effect, if denied this long-desired pleasure, as might occur from the opposite course. It would be safe, at any rate, to try it for one day at a time, and they could always leave the ground at night, Mr. Guilford's house being but a mile distant. So Harry departed in the morning, about as much delighted as Willie, at the prospect of meeting them in the grove.

Mrs. Bradford was unwilling to have Willie disturbed by the confusion that too frequently results from the Sabbath crowd, so she wrote to Harry saying that they would be at the house of Mr. Guilford on Monday evening, where they would stay all night, and proceed to the ground in the morning.

Having settled these preliminaries, the next care of Mrs. Bradford was to impress upon Willie the great importance of keeping his mind tranquil; otherwise scenes so new and interesting would overpower him. Then it would be necessary to return immediately to the quiet shades of home.

Willie replied to this affectionate caution, by saying with a faint smile:

"Sister Sophy, I have a talisman that will allay any undue excitement. It is, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.' I look back upon the singular effect of last summer's journey with deep regret—indeed, I may say with penitence. I see that it was my own fault in a great degree. It was so strange a thing for me to leave the daily routine of home scenes and occupations, that the world with its wonders and enchantments seized me at once; threw me off my guard, and for the time I was like one intoxicated. But I have learned a lesson from which I hope to derive benefit hereafter. I am now determined to abstract my thoughts from everything but calm, deep spiritual enjoyment. This I believe is awaiting me; indeed," he continued, clasping his hands and raising his eyes, "I rejoice to say, it fills my soul at this moment. Still I thirst for larger measures of communion than I have ever experienced." And he sang with fervor:

"With me I know, I feel thou art,
But this cannot suffice,
Unless thou plantest in my breast
A constant paradise."

They reached the house of Mr. Guilford about sunset, and found Harry waiting to receive them. They talked

awhile and then, as Mrs. Bradford and Willie intended to secure a good long preparatory sleep, he left them and rode back to the encampment. Some of the family always returned home at night, and would accompany their guests at an early hour, before breakfast, to enjoy the cool of the morning.

Willie's talisman, and others of a like nature, sufficed to keep his spirit humble and peaceful, with just enough of holy joy to suffuse his eyes from time to time with tears of tenderness and love at the thought or mention of that Saviour to whom he had given his young heart. He dwelt with delight upon the belief that he was to receive a greater blessing—a fuller baptism of the Spirit than he had ever experienced. As he had striven by prayer and self-examination to prepare the temple of his heart, so he now meekly waited for the coming of his Lord—the betrothed looking forward to full espousals.

He spoke little during the drive to the camp, but his sister noticed the varied emotions sweeping over his expressive countenance, under the veil of control imposed by the presence of strangers. She knew, but for that restraint his full soul would have found vent in the language of Scripture or sacred poetry. She feared the effect of these vivid emotions, but it was too late to retrace their steps, and she proceeded with trembling heart to carry out the experiment of one day at camp-meeting.

Harry again met them and accompanied them to the tent of their friends. A retired corner was curtained off expressly for Willie's use, but he seemed at present more disposed to walk about with Harry than to rest. There was no crowd at that early hour, and they enjoyed much together in the beauty and novelty of the scene.

The air was cool and invigorating, which gave Willie an unusual appetite for his first sylvan meal. The anxious heart of Mrs. Bradford could now rest, for Harry took him under his own care, leaving her at liberty to enjoy this long withheld privilege.

The young men soon made their way to the preachers' tent, where they found Mr. Preston, and others of their acquaintance. Among them was one of whom they had often heard but never seen till now. This was the Rev. Mr. Winters, blind from his birth. He was on a visit in the neighborhood, and gladly availed himself of the opportunity to attend the meeting. The child-like simplicity and Christian sweetness of his character and manners had interested Harry from the first day, and he found great pleasure in reading to him and listening to his pious conversation. The nature of his affliction had made him dependent on the care and attention of others, and thus preserved in all its freshness the confiding gentleness of childhood. His mind, naturally quick and retentive, had received more cultivation than might have been expected, and so great was his thirst for knowledge, especially of the Scriptures, that he had regular hours for what he called study, when he could induce his friends to read to him. And who would refuse to minister so great a comfort and benefit to one cut off, by the visitation of God, from providing food for his own craving mind. Brother Winters was seldom at a loss for readers, or a kind hand to guide him on his darkened pathway.

Some perhaps may remember his sweet, cheerful tones, in reply to expressions of regret that he had been left alone a short time. "I am not alone, sister I am never alone." And in speaking he turned his gentle, peaceful face towards the person he addressed as if he would read

the answering expression of theirs. But no answering expression of affection penetrated his sightless eyes. In darkness, but not in gloom, he went on his way, till called to that world of light where, as he affectingly remarked, the first face he should ever behold would be that of his Saviour.

He was just the person to enlist Willie's tenderest sympathy, and indeed they were in so many respects congenial, that their hearts flowed together like kindred drops. It was Harry's great delight to watch over them both together, and from the abounding measure of his own physical and mental development, supply to his interesting charge what their less happy conformation required.

The morning prayer-meeting descended into Willie's spirit like cold water to the thirsty soul; but the first sermon was rather common-place. This gave time for him to become accustomed in some measure, to the scene, before anything occurred to awaken his morbidly keen sensibilities. In the afternoon he did not go out, but lay down and slept. After the second sermon he took a walk with Harry, seeking in vain for some spot corresponding in beauty and seclusion to Harry's favorite dell at the Baltimore camp-meeting. That was

> "A haunt right seldom seen,
> Lovely, lonesome, cool and green."

They were, however, contented to find themselves at a distance from the crowd, and together for a good serious talk.

Willie at first pleaded to stay till after the night sermon, but yielded to his sister's judgment, and returned to Mr. Guilford's, comforting himself with the promise that if

he was as well to-morrow, they would stay. The next day they returned to the grove, "while morning its sweets was flinging over each bower and spray." And now, that the first day had passed off so well, Willie entered with all his heart into the spirit of the meeting. He visited with Harry the different tents where there were prayer-meetings, and his ready tear flowed with those who were striving in yet uncertain conflict with the man of sin, while his beaming smile and tuneful tongue were as ready to rejoice with those who had obtained the victory.

The first sermon was preached by Mr. Winters. He rose and came forward in the stand, with as much freedom as if directed by sight. Standing a moment apparently surveying the congregation, he then announced the hymn by the number and page, repeating it in a tone so clear and expressive of its meaning as to send a thrill to every heart. After a prayer of deep feeling, he stood and joined while the congregation sang a hymn of their own choice. Then he repeated his text, explained and commented on it in a very lucid manner, frequently refering to parallel passages of scripture, giving chapter and verse with as much precision as if reading them. He followed his exposition with an affectionate exhortation, and many hearts melted under the word.

Willie sat in the altar, and drank in every word of his friend with eager delight. His peace flowed like a river. Some persuasion was necessary to induce him to leave the hallowed spot, and when he afterwards met Mr. Winters, he threw his arms around him, and thanked him, with tears, for the comfort he had derived from his sermon. Deeply affected, Mr. Winters returned the embrace of his young friend with equal warmth.

This evening, Mrs. Bradford consented to stay till

after the night service, for Willie's gratification. The lighted ground was to him a scene of enchantment, though the sad thought of Mr. Winters' inability to see it, tempered his enjoyment. He was constantly in danger of calling upon him to admire the scenic effect, but was as constantly checked in his appeal, by a glance at the mild, subdued aspect and veiled eyes of his friend. He walked about till the horn sounded for preaching. Then all minor pleasures gave place to those derived from prayer, praise and hearing the word.

Mr. Preston preached, and when he took his seat, Mr. Winters rose and commenced singing one of his well-known hymns. Perhaps a critic would have discovered no particular merit in the composition; but the melody, soft and plaintive, stole into the hearts of the hearers, together with a touching sense of the affliction of the singer, and melted many to tears.

Mrs. Bradford dared not stay longer, though she found it almost as difficult to tear herself away from the altar as Willie. After lingering and listening again and again as the voice of eloquent prayer, or the thrilling notes of some favorite hymn caught the ear, they at last drove away. Harry had lost so much rest, that his mother persuaded him to return with them for the night.

Their hearts were full, and they rode for some time in silence. Withdrawn from the scene of interest, Willie felt the fatigue and lassitude that might be expected, and as he leaned in Harry's arms, his head resting on his breast, tear after tear sparkled in the moonlight, as it fell from his closed eyes. Mrs. Bradford, to whom alone his pale features were visible, watched him in anxious silence, wondering what had thus stirred his usually placid spirit; but he spoke not.

Gently taking his hand in hers, she said, "What is it, my Willie, that makes you weep?"

Without replying, he raised his head and attempted to wipe away the drops. But they came faster and faster. So giving up the struggle, he fell back again and wept for a moment without restraint. His friends seemed so much troubled that he soon checked the tide again, and said in trembling tones.

"Harry, dearest Harry, you must do my preaching for me."

"Why, Willie, I do not understand you. How do you mean?"

"Oh, I have often hoped that I might be a minister —but I never shall; I never shall be of any use in the world."

"Do not say so, my beloved Willie. You are of great use to us all. You are a great blessing to us, and there are duties of the highest character awaiting you."

"Yes, I know you all love me, far more than I deserve, but I shall never be fit for any duties. I can never be anything but a care and burden. You can go out into the world, and carry the message of peace to poor dying men. Oh, Harry, you will be the honored instrument of saving souls. Even brother Winters, afflicted as he is, can stand up in his Master's name and point poor wanderers to the way of life. I have struggled long to resist and overcome these feelings, and I think I am now willing to kiss the rod. Still, I cannot help feeling that the strokes are painful. Is it wrong for me to feel so?"

"I think not, dear Willie; for if, when chastised, we feel no pain, the rod ceases to be a rod. You and I must be willing to feel pain at the disappointments of

life. I am very sensible that the rod has much to do for me. But do not afflict yourself so greatly. You may yet be restored to health. All power is in the hands of One who knows how to use it."

"I do not expect it," was the dejected reply, as the carriage stopped at the door.

An hour of prayerful communing with his own heart, and a refreshing sleep, calmed the agitation of poor Willie, and he rose in the morning with a thankful sense of the many mercies of his lot, and an humble desire to bring every vain regret into captivity to the will of his divine Master.

CHAPTER XXV.

OPEN VISION.

"The vase of earth, the trembling clod,
Constrained to hold the breath of God."

MRS. SIGOURNEY.

ALL slept later than usual, and as the morning was cool, they did not make their appearance on the camp ground till the prayer-meeting was nearly over. Willie's exercises of the preceding night had left upon his spirit a degree of pensiveness that kept him silent nearly all the drive, and finding most of the inmates of the tent absent, he passed through, and strolled away by himself to the woods. As the time for preaching drew near, Harry set out to find him. They returned together as the congregation were assembling, and bent their steps at once to the altar.

This was the last day of the feast, and the sermon was addressed to Christians, especially to those who had recently experienced the new birth unto righteousness. The preacher was a man of middle age, who bore on his strong features the lines of thought amidst the more irregular furrows ploughed by the wintry blasts of his mountain circuits. Indeed his whole aspect told not of repose in the carpeted, curtained saloon of city life; but of the fatigues and privations incident to midnight journeys among the log cabins of the wilderness; carrying the Gospel to those who found it almost their only com-

fort, over paths scarcely more than the imperfect track of the hunter, where he had often to fasten his whip to the bridle of his horse, and holding off at arm's length, lead him down the broken and precipitous descent, at the imminent peril of both being dashed to the rocky bottom. This was not the training to produce finely polished, written discourses, but rather those full of deep, impassioned heart eloquence, nourished by meditation and prayer, in his solitary rides from one remote appointment to another. His were not the thoughts of other men, for libraries are not carried in saddle-bags though his capacious mind grasped and well digested the substance of such as came in his way. His thoughts caught their glow and power from the fountain of sublimity—from the word of God.

"To you therefore which believe He is precious."

This was his text, and he stood up, with calm and bloodless features, to declare his message, under an unusual sense of accountability to God and man. Thoughts and words flowed from his lips under the immediate inspiration of Him who had promised to be a mouth and wisdom to his servants. If he had known that the crown of martyrdom awaited him, that he was to go from the pulpit to the bar of his Judge, he could not have spoken with more awfully tender earnestness.

He exhibited with graphic power the varied positions in which a believer may feast on the preciousness of Christ, from the day in which he first speaks peace to the sin-sick soul, even to the final, "Well done, good and faithful servants; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

He ceased—and Mr. Preston arose—not to mar by a

word the profound influence of the sermon, but to gaze in wonder at the scene. Many thoughtless, hardened hearts had been there and turned away from the voice of the preacher, insensible as before. But very many kept their seats, overwhelmed by their own realization of the blessedness of faith. Some wept in tender gratitude for so precious a gift. Some of more lively and excitable temperament rejoiced and shouted aloud the praises of that Saviour who was pouring the preciousness of his love into their souls.

Willie, as was his habit, partly from a sense of feebleness, partly from his affectionate disposition towards Harry, had leaned against him, and gradually slipped into his arms. He still lay motionless when the voice of the speaker was no longer heard. His clasped hands, and gently murmured responses had testified to the interest with which he listened, but he had been for some time perfectly still. Did he sleep? Harry slightly changed his position and caught a view of his face. For an instant he thought he had fainted; but the singular rigidity of his frame contradicted that idea. His eyes too were open, and fixed apparently on some object with intense interest, while a smile of indescribable sweetness hovered about his lips.

Harry had never witnessed anything of the kind before, and his bewildered brain could entertain but one idea. Willie was dead! That gentle engaging being over whom he had watched with the solicitude of an elder brother! That meek and loving spirit had taken flight from his very arms, and he sat almost stupefied, clasping the motionless body to his agonized heart while a flood of bitter thought came sweeping over him. He considered not then the effect upon his own future life.

But his already grief-stricken father! How would he bear this final wreck of all his hopes? Some friends pressed around offering assistance. They did not realize the distracted feelings of poor Harry, for to them it was no uncommon effect of religious emotion. Another moment, and Mr. Preston was at his side, and his cheering voice in his ear.

"Why, Harry, my dear brother, here is nothing to alarm or distress you so much. Willie will soon recover."

"Oh, Brother Preston! it cannot be, he does not breathe, his heart is still! He is gone forever."

"My dear brother, I assure you, you are mistaken. But we must take him to the tent."

As he spoke he attempted to raise Willie from his resting place; but Harry only held him more firmly, saying,

"No, I will carry him myself, if you will go before and prepare my mother."

This he did instantly, while Harry lifted the slight form in his arms, and bore it to the tent. To his great surprise, Mrs. Bradford, though much affected, did not manifest much more alarm than did Mr. Preston. When he had deposited with the utmost tenderness, his precious burden on a lounge, he could not be satisfied till a physician came to pronounce on the case, and assured him that Willie was not dead nor dying; that such cases were often brought under his notice. Still, on account of his delicate organization, great care should be taken to prevent too much prostration after the return of consciousness. Indeed he doubted whether he was unconscious, otherwise than as it concerned earthly objects. He believed his soul was filled with holy joy, to the exclusion of all else.

Harry was astounded; but gradually the conversation of his mother and Mr. Preston in part reassured him. Still as Willie was so liable to suffer from any excitement of the brain and nerves, they all felt some anxiety as to its effect upon him.

None but the family, and a few intimate friends, were permitted to come into the tent, while they sat watching around the beautiful image of death. No motion—no perceptible pulse or breathing spoke of life. There were the large dark eyes, still wide open, and fixed as if seeing far beyond the visible. There was the same ineffable expression of peace and joy stamped in marble stillness on his lips. The feelings of all were intensely solemnized. Harry, still agitated by conflicting emotions, at times could almost believe with his mother, Mr. Preston, and others, that it was indeed a glorious manifestation of the divine presence and favor, excluding by its lofty revelations all terrestrial objects, and producing on the physical frame the effect of catalepsy; again he dropped the stiff cold fingers, and sought in vain for some motion of the heart. Then his fortitude with his faith would desert him, and he would bury his face in the pillow beside that of his beloved Willie.

After a while, Mr. Preston began to sing in a subdued voice: "Oh joyful sound of gospel grace," etc. One or two others joined him, and they had not proceeded far before Willie's eyes were observed to swim in tears. Presently they overflowed, and rolled down his face. His fingers became less rigid, and Harry's anxious gaze detected a slight motion of the lips. Awe-struck he held his breath, while he bent over him to catch, if possible, a sound. But it was not till a prayer had been offered and a second hymn sung, that words became audible to

his deeply interested watchers. Every ear was quickened to catch the sound.

"God is love—My soul is happy—Heaven is my home —My life is hid with Christ in God."

Such were some of the first faint utterances of that blissful trance. But as soon as all were silent around him, he relapsed again into apparent insensibility. In this state he continued for some hours. Gradually his muscles relaxed, and he seemed to recognize the loved ones around him; smiled upon them, and putting up his arms, drew Harry's face down to his pillow. His expressions of praise and love became more connected; his features shone as if with a ray from the bright world above, while words of glowing eloquence poured from his lips. His friends fearing the exhaustion that must necessarily follow, tried to induce him to rest. It was long before his happy soul could yield to the claims of the body. At last, however, he sunk into profound sleep.

Long, calm and restoring was that sleep. When he awoke, he was conscious that loved ones were around him, that they spoke to him, and words of love came readily in response. But even then it was evident that the spiritual was still dominant, for if left to himself a little while, his whole being seemed tending upward and onward as if about to take flight.

Harry and his mother held long consultations as to what was to be done next, and whether he would be willing or able to be taken home. They dared not remain on the ground, especially as it was the last night, and there could be no quiet for Willie. But how to get him home was the question. Would he be willing to go? Something must be attempted immediately, so they returned to his couch, where Mr. Winters was

singing, "The voice of free grace," and Willie with tears and smiles trying to join; but his full soul found connected utterance impossible, and he lay grasping Mr. Winters' hand, and drinking in the sacred strains with that thirst which can never be quenched at the broken cisterns of earth.

When the hymn was finished, Mrs. Bradford asked him if he thought he could bear the ride home.

"Oh, yes. I can bear anything. Take me where you please, beloved sister; I carry my peace with me. All places are alike. 'His presence makes my paradise, and where he is, is Heaven.' Dear Brother Winters, yesterday I envied you and Harry the privilege of preaching the blessed Saviour; but I do not envy any one now. I have 'Christ within, the hope of glory.' He is my soul's satisfying portion, and now my only desire is that my Lord would

> 'More of heaven bestow
> And let the vessel break;
> And bid my ransomed spirit go
> To grasp the God I seek.'"

And his fervent gaze went upward with the words, as Mr. Winters, catching the flame of devotion, sung with enthusiasm,

> "In rapturous awe on him to gaze,
> Who bought the sight for me;
> And shout and wonder at his grace
> To all eternity."

It seemed as if the frail vessel must indeed break while the spirit struggled to rise higher and higher in divine communion.

Mrs. Bradford hastened her preparations, and just as the sun was sinking behind the mountains, in solemn silence they left the hallowed spot for Mr. Guilford's, there to pass the night, and if possible, in the morning to return to Hunter's Lodge.

Willie slept nearly all the time during the drive, which gave Mrs. Bradford's thoughts freedom to stray homeward. She wondered how her father would regard these, to him strange exercises of Willie, deriving no little comfort from the fact his consent had been granted to Willie's own urgent entreaty, without her expressing a wish on the subject. If his health suffered no injury, all would be well; but she could not help some forebodings on that point.

On arriving at Mr. Guilford's, Willie went immediately to bed, and Harry, after persuading his mother to leave them, sat and watched, for some hours, his placid repose. Then he lay down beside him, and was soon in the sweet sleep of youth and health.

In dreams he went back to the tented grove, and thought he kneeled in the altar beside Rose while she wept and prayed that her sins might be forgiven. He seemed to join in her sorrow as well as her petitions, till she raised her eyes to his saying, "Oh, Harry, now I am happy; now we shall meet in heaven." Just then it seemed as if some one leaned over them and sung. He waked, and still the voice was there. The morning moon was shedding her pale beams upon the bed. Willie was reclining against the pillows, with his eyes shut, and singing:

"When on Zion we stand, having gained the blest shore,
With our harps in our hands, we will praise him evermore:
We'll range the blest fields on the banks of the river,
And sing hallelujah forever and ever."

Then Harry knew that it was his voice chiming in with his dream that had waked him. As Willie finished the stanza he opened his eyes, and seeing who was watching him, smiled, and passing his long white fingers through Harry's hair, he said:

"You must not lie awake for me, dear Harry, I am quite well, and oh, so happy! Too happy to sleep any more now. But you must go to sleep."

"I have slept a long time, little uncle, and dreamed that Rose was converted."

"Did you? Dear Rose; I wish it were true—and my dear father, and Jinnie and George. 'Oh that the world might taste and see the riches of his grace.' Oh how much I love them; more than I ever did before. They must be Christians. Harry, we must pray for them incessantly." After a pause, "Harry, did you ever realize the full meaning of those words, 'The peace of God which passeth all understanding?' I know something of it now, oh how glorious!" Clasping his hands, he again lay still as if feasting on the thought.

Thus they continued to hold sweet converse, till the increasing light betokened the coming day. Again Willie fell asleep, but Harry's thoughts were busy, and he soon dressed and sat down by the window to banquet on the fresh and fragrant morning air.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LAY PREACHER.

"I have done at length with dreaming;
Henceforth, oh thou soul of mine!
Thou must take up sword and gauntlet,
Waging warfare most divine!"

No time having been specified for the return of his children, Col. Hunter was absent on some business at the village when they arrived, and before he came back they were quietly established at home, ready to enter upon its pleasant daily occupations.

Willie had been silent and thoughtful all the morning, which mood his friends were careful not to disturb; so Mrs. Bradford busied herself in various ways, while he lay on the sofa in her room, now and then giving her a smile full of tenderness, or taking her hand caressingly in his, if she came near him.

When Col. Hunter returned in the evening, and Mrs. Rodney, Mr. Stuart, George and Virginia joined them, he received them with his usual affection, but continued grave and rather silent, which they naturally ascribed to fatigue, but which Mrs. Bradford and Harry more justly attributed to an instinctive reluctance to express feelings and sentiments that they could scarcely understand or appreciate.

The next day when Mrs. Bradford returned from the

daily inspection of her household, she found Willie in his favorite resort, her room, walking up and down, and repeating:

"My raptured soul is bathing yet
In that refreshing shower;
For when did captive freed forget
The dear deliverance hour!
'Twas long my thought that state like this
Was not for life's sad day,
Till in a flood of sacred bliss
My doubts were swept away.

"I heard His faithful servant bring
The precious promise forth:
I felt each word unloose a string
That bound me to this earth.
How dear the place—how doubly dear
Those words must be to me;
The silver sounds I ever hear,
They tell me I am free."

After a few more turns, he again sought repose on the sofa, and looking up in his sister's face with a smile, he asked:

"Sister Sophy, do you know how much I love this old resting-place?"

"I am very glad if you do, dear Willie. It is exceedingly dear to me, for my mother spent much of the last few weeks of her life on it."

"Did she? Then that is another reason why I should love it, besides being linked with all the care and kindness that have been bestowed on me ever since I lost my health. How many hours of weakness and pain passed on this sofa have been brightened by your love, and strengthened by your instructions. Before you came, dear father and Jinnie were unwearied in their endea-

vors to make me happy, by surrounding me with everything that I desired. And oh! how exacting—how selfish and irritable I was!—not that I have anything to boast of now in the way of self-discipline. But you have set before me a higher standard, and taught me in whose strength to strive for victory. If these cushions could have chronicled all the instructive words, all the holy conversations that have passed over them, and would continue to impart them to others like a book, what an invaluable piece of furniture my old friend would be! But here comes Harry, and I am glad of it. Come, Harry, sit down here, and let me lie in your arms. It was in that position that my soul was so nearly carried out of my body in a vision of glory. Oh! beloved ones, words cannot express what I then enjoyed. I thought I was to return to earth no more."

"Did you feel disappointed, dear Willie?" asked Harry, as he took his place on the sofa, "when you found yourself still in the body? I know I was inexpressibly comforted to find you yet with us."

"No—I still had so much of the divine presence as to think of nothing else for a long time. Since that I have sometimes felt a momentary regret that I had not escaped from this poor clog of flesh. But it is best. I see much to do for my Master before I can ask to be taken home. My life has been one of luxurious idleness—of poetry and music. But I am waking up now. Long neglected duties call upon me. You both, and dear Mr. Stuart, have been doing my work, and nobly have you prepared the way. You, dear sister, and Mr. Stuart, will still be with me, but Harry must go into a larger field. These poor souls will be required at my hands. The idea of college, so perseveringly cherished,

I now resign without an emotion of regret. I know that my time will be too short for that, and with what ability I have it must be improved in another way. My parish" —and a smile lighted for a moment the serene gravity of his countenance—" my parish will not require a very profound erudition. Do not look so sad. I feel no indications of speedy death. I may live some years yet, though that is scarcely probable. You may even be taken home first, but you would not wish to go and leave me behind—you would not deprive me of this dear pillow, Harry, when, after having done the little all that my Lord requires of me, I again seek for its rest?"

Harry found no words of answer, but he folded him closer to his bosom, and pressed his lips upon his forehead. Willie did not see the eyes, brimming with drops of love, that bent over him, but he felt the mute gesture and was satisfied. After a while he resumed:

"I have a little more that I wish to say, and now is as well as any time. You will soon go away, Harry, and I trust often return to find me here. But, Harry, when you hear that the time of my release is at hand you will come to me. Perhaps this is too selfish, and I may have grace to conquer it by that time, but if I send for you, you will come, I know."

Receiving the same kind of answer as before, he smiled his gratitude and added: "Now I will lie on the cushions, and perhaps I shall sleep."

With some difficulty Willie was persuaded to rest the remainder of the week, but he would take a class in the Sabbath school, and on Monday began visiting at the quarters, reading to the negroes, and talking about their everlasting interests. Many, who would have given light heed to such subjects, or even refused attention to

any one else, listened with a kind of wondering awe to "poor Mars Willie," who had been so long the object of their pity, as one marked for the grave, and who must be indulged in every fancy. They listened till the gentle and affecting tones of his appeals began to find an entrance to their hearts, bearing with them the weighty truths of the gospel. Thus he was often made a blessing where others failed to obtain a hearing.

His father, Virginia and others felt the hallowed influence of his sweet example, and often melted under his words of tender expostulation and persuasion. Mrs. Bradford and Harry trembled lest he should tax his small amount of strength so severely as to be entirely prostrated; but he seemed borne above all fatigue by a spirit mightier than his own, and it was only when he came home and lay on his favorite sofa that his wan features and languid manner betrayed his debility.

His friends generally thought him so much improved in health that even Mrs. Rodney almost began to think it was of no consequence if Harry did persist in his perverse ways, Willie was so gentle, so yielding, and withal so very fond of Mr. Stuart, that together they could make anything of him they pleased. She even at times entertained the wild idea that he would so far regain his health as to marry Rose Carter himself and thus carry out the original design of the two families. Many a fair castle did she build on this frail foundation, only to see them crumble again to ruin. Mr. Stuart, to be sure, was not quite so enthusiastic. He had his fears that Willie's fervent spirit would wear away its delicate casket; but she would not hear of it. "Why, look at him," she would say; "his eye is bright and he has more color in

his cheek than he has had for a long time, with a spring in his step that is quite enlivening."

One afternoon, as Willie was returning home, he stopped at the cottage of old nurse Letty. The busy wheel was instantly stilled, and the large chair, kept for such beloved visitors, drawn from its corner, as she welcomed him with that mingled air of deference and fondness, so often exhibited by persons in her position.

"Ah, Mars Willie, I mighty glad to see you, but you look tired, honey. Sit down in dis ole chair, and rest youself—a mighty nice chair it is; my own blessed mistress gave it to me."

"I am a little tired, mammy, and I will sit with you till Daddy Jack comes in, for I have something to say to you both."

"Have you, honey, and Jack is de very ole man dat will be proud to hear it, as well as your ole mammy. But what shall I get for you, Mars Willie? you look like you wanted something to strengthen you up."

"Oh, no, I shall be better when I have rested a little."

"He leaned back in the chair, and shut his eyes. Letty looked at him a long time in silence, shook her head and heaved a sigh which only her tenderness for him prevented from deepening into a groan. While they sat thus, the stillness was broken by a quick, firm step, and Harry entered. Willie opened his eyes and smiled as Harry drew a chair near him and sat down.

"Why, Willie," he began, "you staid so much longer than usual, that I came to look for you."

"There was no necessity for that, dear Harry, you see I am resting very comfortably here with mammy. I want to talk with her and Daddy Jack when he comes

in about forming a class to meet here. I think there are several that would like to join it. I have consulted brother Loring, and he likes the plan."

"But who is to lead this class when you have arranged it?"

The color flushed into Willie s cheek as he answered: "That seems to be the difficulty. Brother Loring says he does not know of any one, and wishes me to take it for the present. I know I am utterly unqualified, but if there is no one else, I suppose it is my duty to try."

"No, little uncle, your duty lies in quite another direction. You have already undertaken more than you have strength to perform. My mother will never consent to it, and I know you will not persist in doing anything she thinks wrong."

"Mars Harry," put in old Letty with great quickness, "dats de best kind o' sense. Everybody sees Mars Willie's trying to do too much now. You see, honey," turning to him, "you forget you're not strong. Oh, please, Mars Willie, don't overdo yourself."

"I have no idea of it, mammy; but I have never been so strong as I am now. I do not think it will hurt me."

"But pray, my dear Willie, do not do anything about it this evening. Go home with me and we will talk it all over while you rest on the sofa."

In truth, Willie began to feel that he had gone to the limit of his powers, and consented to defer the affair of the class till another time. So bidding a kind "good bye," to the old nurse, they left her and returned to the Lodge.

Poor Letty looked after them, as arm in arm they slowly passed out of sight among the trees. When she could see them no more she turned away, and the groan

no longer crushed to a sigh, relieved in some degree her heavy heart. But she had no one to talk to, so she mechanically resumed her spinning. At the same time thought was so earnest that her lips moved, and sometimes half-uttered words escaped, while the frequent and emphatic shakes of her head told plainly that the engrossing subject was by no means pleasant. Presently Jack made his appearance and Letty moved about, putting his supper on the table; but as soon as the blessing was reverently asked, she muttered something about not wanting anything now and coming back presently, as she hurried out of the cottage, determined to let Jack eat his supper in peace. When she came back he had finished his meal and taken his pipe. So not being able to hold back any longer, she saluted him in a way that made him take the pipe out of his mouth and stare at her in astonishment.

"Well, for once I'm glad you didn't come no sooner."

"Heigh, ole 'oman! what's in de wind now?"

"Oh, dese childern! dey just been here. Oh dear! Mars Willie—he's jest gwine to kill hisself, and you know dat well as I do."

"Well, I don't see but what he will, if dey all up to de house don't stop him. What's he 'bout now?"

"Why, he wants to have a new class for dem poor critters, dat was up to be prayed for last week, over dere to Jake's. Dey's all a shoutin' now, 'cept Tim and Fan, and dey'll be a comin' through mighty quick, for dey's real earnest, poor things. Who'd ever 'spected to see dat outdacious Tim among de mourners? but, honey, I tell ye he's past cutting his shines now. He's as solemn as an owl. And oh-o dat blessed Mars Willie—de way

dey jest worship him! and he's jest a killing hisself, as I said afore. Dat's all."

And poor Letty fairly broke down, and covered her face with her apron.

"There's no use in giving up so, wife. Mars Willie 'll go right up to glory. But what's de reason you didn't want me home?"

Letty had to rock back and forward awhile longer before she could control the workings of her large features so as to speak. Then, as she wiped her eyes, she resumed:

"Why 'bout dat class. He wants to have it meet here and dey can't find nobody to lead it. So he say he must. It's too much for him, poor chile, and I reckon dey won't let him. Mars Harry coaxed him to let it alone to-night and go home. But he can't stay long with us, no how. He don't belong down here, no more'n a rale angel;" and again the apron went over head and all.

"Don't take on so, wife. Miss Sophy 'll look after de dear chile. To be sure, since he came home from camp-meeting, he do seem fitter for heaven dan dis poor valley. We oughtn't to want to keep him down here, I know. But what'll become of Mars Davy when he's taken up, beats me. I b'lieve he'll not be long behind; and den Mars Harry away preaching—poor Miss Sophy—poor all of us."

"But, Jack, don't you s'pose Mars Harry come home, when all belongs to him?"

"Oh, I don't know. It would go hard with him, poor boy, if he does. His heart aint nowhere else but just in preaching."

"Jack!"

"Well, what next?"

"You don't s'pose Mars Harry ever sell any of de people, do you?"

"*No, my dear!* 'Taint in him, de Lord be praised. But if he's away, den der's nobody but overseers, and when they haint got nobody to watch em—oh, I tell ye dey make de people see times. But, ole 'oman, dis aint right. Dis is just distrustin' o' Providence. Dese troubles aint come yet and mebby dey never will. So wash up your dishes, wife, and we'll try to sing, 'The Lord will provide,' before prayers."

Mrs. Bradford and Harry found no difficulty in convincing Willie that he had undertaken too much, for his overtasked energies gave way, and so complete was the reaction, that for several day he was unable to sit up. As he gradually rallied, however, his views of duty became clearer and he willingly yielded to the advice of his friends to be more economical of his strength. He still attended to his class in Sabbath-school, and made frequent visits to the cabins of the people, but in greater moderation.

He was received everywhere with unbounded affection, and his exhortations listened to with the tenderest respect. All seemed to regard him less as their young master, to whom their labor and obedience were due, than as a messenger of love and mercy, sent to instruct their ignorance, to comfort their sorrows, to share their joys, to lead them to a Saviour. If any were sick, it was Mars Willie's hand that made the cooling draught more refreshing, and his voice that made the page of divine truth more welcome. If any of the younger ones were disobedient or refractory, the gentle reproof of Mars Willie was sufficient to curb the most rebellious, while

his smile and commendation were their highest reward.

Harry continued to make excursions about the district with Mr. Preston; but when he was at home he relieved Willie of as much labor as possible. Mr. Stuart, as far as he could, did the same; but his flock were widely scattered over the country, and he was often detained for days together at some distant point.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SUMMONS TO THE FIELD.

"Must I be carried to the skies,
On flowery beds of ease;
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas!

"Sure I must fight if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by thy word."

One morning when Harry had been staying at home longer than usual, he came into his mother's room with an open letter in his hand, which he laid before her, and sitting down, looked over her while she read. Before she had finished the perusal, she dropped it. Mother and son were locked in each other's arms, and a few tears fell. From which eyes, or from both, it was hard to say. It was but a moment, however, and Mrs. Bradford raised her head, trying to smile.

"I am wrong, my son," she said; "but I find I am not quite a Spartan mother. It is only what I desired for you, and yet now that it has come a little sooner than I expected, I cannot but feel that this is to be your home no longer. You must go out into the world, and I cannot go with you."

Again she buried her face in his bosom, and Harry found it equally difficult to speak or to keep silence;

but he clasped her closely to his heart and fully shared with her in the bitterness of the anticipated parting. The letter was from Mr. Preston, and was as follows:

"DEAR HARRY:

"I have just received a few lines from Brother Lanning, and he wants help. The case is this—poor Stanley was sent to Long Run circuit in the hope that mountain air and the saddle would build him up. It was of no use, and I thought so at the time, but he wanted to go. He has fairly given up, poor fellow, and gone home to die, I fear. This leaves the place vacant, and the circuit is too heavy for one. I should like to have you go and try Bush College till conference. You know there are many of our good brethren that will look on you with more favor, if you begin at the right end; perhaps I am one of them. At any rate, I have no desire to see you pampered up in city stations till you are fit for nothing but down beds, plum cake and coaches. Poor Stanley! He was a fine fellow, and I am truly sorry we have to lose him; and all because he had not a mother, like some of my friends, to keep him from studying himself into a consumption; and so when he entered upon the arduous duties of an itinerant, one year and part of another have finished him. Well, perhaps people will learn after a few more like him have been sacrificed. I do not like very well to send you out of my district, but it cannot be helped. I shall write to Brother Lanning and tell him that you are a son of mine, and that he must take care of you. If you agree to the plan, you had better be ready to start the first of the week. But I shall be at home before that, and will give you any direction or assistance that you need."

Mrs. Bradford soon regained her composure and finished the letter. Then putting it back into Harry's hand she said:

"Well, my son, what do you say?"

"You shall say, dear mother; you know I am still your boy."

This was again nearly too much for her forced calmness, but after a brief struggle she replied:

"I can say nothing against it my child."

"And then we must remember that it is only half a year at any rate. I can probably come home a little before conference, and if all are well you must go to Baltimore with me."

"That is a very pleasant prospect, and I will try to believe it will be so."

The news of Harry's expected departure caused a general sadness, not only among the inmates of Hunter's Lodge and Glen Cottage, but throughout the neighborhood.

Mr. Preston came and gave him all the directions needful about the route and stopping places. One question was about his horse. "Would Fleetfoot be stout enough for the long journeys over winter roads?"

Mr. Preston doubted, so they adjourned to the stable to settle that point, and when he looked at the slender limbs and glossy coat of the graceful creature, he shook his head.

"No, Harry, you had better let Fleetfoot stay at home, and provide yourself with a *Surefoot*—that is what you will want most. Your riding this winter will be no fancy business, and you will need a very strong horse."

Col. Hunter immediately proposed to furnish him one that would suit better, and Harry, half glad, half sorry,

turned away from his favorite. His grandfather, understanding his feelings, laid his hand on his shoulder, saying:

"Never mind, Harry, I will see that Fleetfoot is taken care of till you come back to claim him again."

Harry thanked him, and giving Fleetfoot another pat, followed to the house, where they found Mrs. Rodney with her niece.

"But, Sophy," she was just saying, "it seems to me it would be much better for him to go by the public conveyance, and buy a horse when he gets there. How is he to take his trunks?"

Harry laughed as he replied to this question: "Why, Aunt Rodney, what should I do with trunks on a circuit?"

"Now, Mrs. Rodney," interposed Mr. Preston, "that is not a bad idea of yours. Perhaps it would be as well for you to adopt it, Harry. You will need both summer and winter clothes, and some few books. No doubt you can suit yourself with a horse as well there as here. You can leave your trunk at some one of your stopping-places, as you will not want to carry your whole wardrobe around the circuit with you."

"But I supposed," said Harry, again laughing, "that I must expect to live on horseback, and keep house in my saddle-bags."

"And so you will a great part of the time; but it will be very convenient to have a trunk to go to, to refit now and then. But what is Willie saying, that has brought such a gleam of sunshine over Sister Bradford's face?"

"I have thought of another great advantage in Aunt Rodney's plan;" answered Willie with animation, "as Harry will travel so much faster in the stage, he need not leave us so soon."

"Admirable! Willie, that will do exactly, for I must be at the Court House on Thursday morning, and by leaving here on Wednesday evening, I can take you there, Harry, to meet the stage, and we shall have time for a long chapter of fatherly advice and admonition on the way.

All concurred in the superiority of that plan, so it was settled that Mr. Preston should call for Harry on Wednesday evening.

Mrs. Rodney managed to disguise her chagrin pretty well as long as she remained at the Lodge, but as she slowly pursued her way through the embowered pathway, leading to her own home, she angrily plucked at the faded autumn roses, while tears of vexation filled her eyes, but seeing Mr. Stuart, who had been absent several days, standing in the veranda, she forced them back and tried to look as usual. It was of no avail. Mr. Stuart saw plainly that something had discomposed her. It was not a very rare event, he knew, for her to return from her brother's in this state of mind, but he had too much politeness to notice it, and tried to draw her into conversation on other subjects. As one most likely to dispel the shadows from her spirit, he remarked that he had passed the night at Gaywood. This information eliciting only a brief inquiry for the health of the family, he tried again.

"Miss Rose is expected home the last of next week."

"Indeed! I began to think Mrs. Carter had given her up to Jessie entirely. They have returned from Old Point, then."

In fact, Mrs. Carter began to be a little apprehensive of danger to Rose from Mrs. Rodney's undisguised efforts to promote an attachment between her and Harry, though

if she could be sure it was reciprocal nothing could give her more pleasure. On this account she had favored an unusually long visit to her sister.

Finding that the return of her favorite was insufficient to restore the lady's smiles, the discomfited young man was constrained to silence.

After a pause, during which it began to dawn upon Mrs. Rodney's mind that her young friend was in no way connected with the cause of her irritation, and that she was not treating him with the respect and kindness that she really felt for him, she resolutely cleared her brow, and said:

"Excuse me, my dear sir; but my grief and disappointment are too much for my self-control. Harry leaves us next Wednesday, to commence his life as a regular *circuit rider*," and the last words were uttered with an unmistakable intonation of contempt.

"My dear madam, I sincerely sympathize with you in your sorrow at the absence of your nephew. But do not be so much troubled; he is one who will elevate any position in which he may be placed. His talents, manners, and, indeed, his whole character"——

"Don't mention it, Mr. Stuart. The greater his merit, the more deplorable the mistake in thus sacrificing him."

"But I cannot consider him sacrificed, dear lady. He is only going to do missionary work for a little while. It is considered an excellent school for a young man."

"Mr. Stuart," retorted the lady with some petulance, "I declare you are just as well pleased to have Harry a Methodist, as you would be to see him in the church."

"Let us not arrogate to ourselves the exclusive right to that name, my dear Mrs. Rodney. I believe he is now a true member of the invisible church of the First-

born, whose names are written in heaven. With most heartfelt joy would I welcome him into the arms of our own beloved branch of the church; for, of course, I should not be in it, did I not believe it to be the best, the truest, the most scriptural. But that cannot be. Harry and I have repeatedly conversed on the subject, with perfect frankness and freedom on both sides, and after all, we stand just where we began; except that every day has united us more firmly in the bonds of personal friendship. I consider Harry Bradford one of the finest specimens of Christian youth that I have ever seen."

"There it is again. What do you suppose he will be in a few years? He is too young to have his character formed. This is a most important time for him; just out of college, he ought to be immediately introduced to the best society, to confirm and finish his certainly excellent promise. But I am told that the place where he is going is almost destitute of good society; that much of the time he will pass among the mountains in log huts, where the white people are scarcely above the blacks. I expect he will become a perfect savage."

"Dear madam, these people have souls to save as well as the most refined and elegant in our cities. I spent the first year after my ordination among a people, I suppose, of the same type; and more genuine kindness I never received. There I discovered humble, devoted piety, that only requires the gifted pen of a Richmond to be the admiration and example of the world. I partook of their homely repasts, I rested on their hard but clean beds, and warmed myself by their hospitable fires. Yes, and made friends—honest, heart-whole friends—that I hope never to lose in time or eternity." He paused, blushing

at his own enthusiasm. Then smilingly added: "I hope you have not found me quite a savage."

Mrs. Rodney could not forbear an answering smile to the droll questioning glance of her young friend, but she was not quite ready to be appeased yet, so she only rejoined:

"But you cannot deny that Methodism is a great leveller. It will not be surprising if Harry, when he next visits me, takes his seat in my drawing-room with muddy boots and his hat on."

Mr. Stuart laughed as he replied: "You need entertain no fears on that subject. Harry Bradford will never be levelled by Methodism, or anything else, below the standard of a perfect gentleman. To him it will be no more a leveller than the purest Christianity. Did it never occur to you that we might take a little instruction from Methodism on that point?"

"Astonishing! Mr. Stuart. I think we had better drop this subject. Our views, I find, can never harmonize."

"Certainly, if you wish it; but allow me to add one word more, lest you should misjudge me. I see what I consider the defects of Methodism as clearly as any one; but I respect it for what it has done—where, perhaps, no other system would have been available. Those defects, it seems to me, are increasing, while its peculiar adaptation to certain circumstances is decreasing. I believe it has fulfilled its mission, and must gradually decline."

"I am sure I do not care how soon, if it will only be in time to save my poor Harry."

The last days of Harry, as a boy at home, passed heavily away; for all felt the difference between this

departure and merely going to college. Now he was stepping forth into the world as a man—to enter upon its active duties—to assume its high responsibilities, and all hearts, though in different ways, saddened under the pressure.

The habitual gloom of Col. Hunter generally took the form of whatever event was present. Now he was fully possessed with the belief that he should not live to see Harry return in the spring, and he solemnly entreated the renewal of the promise made to him on the eve of the journey to Niagara, and again it was as solemnly given. Virginia loved Harry, and would miss his brother-like attentions; but she had her own little circle of cares and joys, which were daily becoming more absorbing, and then her tastes and pursuits, all tending in another direction, had since her marriage been a constant bar to intimate association. Mrs. Rodney's grief was but a thin veil for her displeasure at its cause. Mr. Stuart keenly felt the loss of that mind that could best meet the demand of his own in its native powers and extensive acquirements. Mrs. Bradford, the silent, self-denying, devoted mother, felt as if the soul was departing from the body of her life—but, as usual, shut the pang within her own breast; and, with pale cheek, but steady energy, attended to every necessary preparation, forgetting nothing that could contribute to the comfort of her darling son, and could even meet his anxious glance with a meek, serious smile. But Willie's tender, feminine heart, overflowed with love and sorrow. When the hour of parting at length arrived, he drew Harry apart, and, with a burst of tears, cast himself into his arms, saying:

"Oh! my own brother Harry, how shall I bear this

separation? When I come home from my imperfect attempts to perform the duties devolving upon me, you will not be here to supply my deficiencies, and calling me little uncle, bid me rest while you take my place. Oh! Harry, I am passing away, and what is to become of these souls and bodies intrusted to me? Will you not take care of them when I am gone?"

The embrace was warmly returned, and Harry replied as soon as he could command himself, "Do not distress yourself, dear Willie; all that I can do you may depend upon. But there is a stronger arm for us to lean upon. You like to have a text to stay yourself upon. I will give you one now: 'Trust ye in the Lord, forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.'"

"Oh, Harry!—yes, that comforts me. Where was my faith? It is, indeed, 'better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.'"

The gentle, timid heart had found its true resting-place. The tears ceased to flow, and the parting, though sorrowful, was trustful.

When Hunter's Lodge, with its beloved inmates, was hid from Harry's view, among its own embracing woods, he could appreciate the delicacy of Mr. Preston in leaving him entirely to his own meditations, while they were passing through the familiar scenes of the beautiful country around his home. Gradually, as objects came in view unconnected with heart-associations, he drew him into conversation upon topics bearing not too closely upon the present pain.

Harry was man enough to have borne all this with comparative fortitude, but the image of his mother—his all-sympathizing, self-forgetting mother, with her varied

cares, cheering her desponding father—tempering the too fervent zeal of Willie, lest it should at once sunder the attenuated thread of life—answering with unchanging sweetness and patience the irritating remonstrances of Mrs. Rodney—providing with maternal watchfulness for the wants of the servants; this was the vision continually before his eyes that made the separation from home so trying.

Time after time the question suggested itself—was it right to leave his beloved mother to sink under these trials? His grandfather urged him to stay. Ease and an abundance of the good things of life allured him. But for what was he placed in this world? To lie down in the lap of luxury? To have every want supplied by affectionate relatives and obsequious slaves? To float along from pleasure to pleasure till called to give an account of health and vigor wasted in indolence—talents unemployed or perverted—above all the solemn mandate, 'Go preach my Gospel'—unheeded, disobeyed? No, no, it could not be. His mother herself would frown on such a course. He must turn his back upon the enticing comforts of home, and learn to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," casting even the burden of his mother's cares upon Him who "knoweth our frame, who remembereth that we are dust."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE VETERAN'S COUNSEL.

"Experience is a wondrous treasure,
Slow gained mid toil, and pain, and pleasure;
Precious as gold are counsels sage,
That fall from lips of saintly sage."

CONVERSATION did not flow with freedom for several miles after Mr. Preston and Harry began their journey. But after giving ample time for the indulgence of natural feelings, Mr. Preston thought best to direct the eye of his young companion to the future, and was pleased to find a ready response.

"Harry, your mother's health seems as good at this time as I have ever known it," he began, for he well knew the sharpest point of the present trial.

"I think it is; but she will have so much pressing upon her this winter, that I have sometimes doubted whether it was right for me to leave her."

"But if you were to hang about the Lodge all winter, there would be nothing for you to do that cannot just as well be done by those who will necessarily be on the ground. Your mother wishes you to go. Mrs. Preston will be near, and can spend as much time with her as she desires. I shall keep an eye upon Willie, myself, and not let him exert himself beyond his strength. The weather, too, will keep him at home most of the winter, and oblige him to spare himself. Willie will do well, I

trust. But you, my boy," and he laid his hand on the knee of his young friend, and looked kindly but gravely in his face, "you will not have such smooth roads to travel."

"I do not expect it, my dear brother," and with the warm zealous blood of earnest-hearted youth kindling in his cheek, he added, "I do not wish it."

"I believe you, Harry, I believe you. And yet," he continued thoughtfully, "I sometimes almost accuse myself of putting you to too severe a test. In truth, having no boys of my own, I am a little apt to experiment with those of other people, and in some instances have been tolerably successful. There are my two wards, Isaac and Ben Fuller: they are honest, thriving business men, and useful Christian men, too. But wife and I have always fixed our hearts on you, for the preacher among our boys. Now, this Long Run Circuit is not one of the easiest in the conference, as I have the best of reasons for knowing, but there seems to be no one to fill the gap that is better able than you are. If you had waited till conference, the bishop would perhaps have edged you in somewhere among the cities, and the boys would have said it was because you were the grandson of Col. Hunter, that you were more favored than some of them. I would rather you should find out for yourself, at the outset, what the life of an itinerant is. There are too many conference pets now-a-days, but if a Methodist preacher is anything, he is a missionary, prepared to labor for souls where he is most needed, not where he can have the most comfortable quarters and the most pleasant society. If you can't stand it this winter, Harry, you can come home."

Harry smiled, saying he did not feel much like giving

up yet; and inquired what kind of presiding elder Mr. Lanning was.

"Well, Brother Lanning makes a pretty efficient elder. He is not so much of a preacher as he promised to be when he started, but then he made one great mistake in the beginning. However, you will find him a kind friend, Harry."

"May I ask what mistake, sir, that I may be sure not to make a similiar one myself?"

Mr. Preston hesitated, as if doubtful what to say, but at last proceeded. "Well, in consideration that all young men are in danger of running their heads against the same post, I will tell you. He married a very unsuitable woman, for the wife of a Methodist preacher especially. I am afraid she does not hold up his hands very well. Harry, that is a mistake against which you cannot too carefully watch and pray. By treating the subject as a light laughing matter, multitudes of fine young men bind themselves for life to a mere clog, and can never accomplish anything that is expected of them. Everything, I had almost said, in your future depends upon the kind of woman you marry. And yet with all the care that can be taken, it seems that the wisest and best make often the most fatal blunders. I believe there is no safety but in prayer." Then suddenly turning and looking at Harry with the utmost seriousness he asked, "Harry, do you remember to pray for your wife?"

Harry found it impossible to help laughing heartily at this question, and in fact, Mr. Preston smiled himself a moment, but the acknowledged importance of the subject again sobered them.

"I cannot say," replied Harry, "that I have at present any knowledge of the lady in question; but the duty has

often been impressed on my mind, by my mother, of praying that a suitable person may be provided for me when the time comes; and that as, of course, if I am ever to marry, the important individual is now in existence, it is incumbent on me to pray for her temporal and eternal interests."

"And yet you laugh—and blush too. Take care, take care. You are on enchanted ground."

"I cannot help laughing when I talk about it, but I agree with you entirely, and think of it as soberly as you could desire."

"I am glad if you do; for a man not only makes himself miserable and cripples his usefulness, but it does not end there. What can a travelling preacher do in the way of training his children? He is often sent to places where there are no suitable schools, and he must be away from home himself the greater part of the time, so that if he has not a wife capable of forming the entire minds and characters of his children, what can be expected? Why the poor, weak mother can only use the name of the absent father as a rod of terror, to insure that obedience and respect which she is incapable of securing for herself. And when the husband comes home for a short interval of rest, his wife receives him with a long list of domestic rebellions and disasters. Instead of seeing his children run to meet him with smiles and kisses, they shrink from him as the inflicter of all delayed pains and penalties, longing for that absence which will again remove all restraints, and leave them to the unchecked license of their own way. Thus it goes on, till perhaps some personal affliction overtakes them in their reckless course, or their sins are set in such dread array before them at some camp-meeting or revi-

val, that they are frightened out of their carelessness and begin to pray. Then some seed of the word may fall into the unprepared ground of their hearts, and by the mercy of God, germinate and bring forth some fruit. But oh! what poor half-hearted Christians they make, if they do not speedily backslide and become more trifling and worldly than ever. When I hear it said that the children of ministers are the worst in the world, it makes me groan in spirit; for I bitterly feel the truth of it, and while I see the cause, can see no remedy, till young men will awake from the folly of being caught by a pretty simpering face, and manners that save them the trouble of courting."

"It does not seem to be a subject for mirth, indeed, in the view you present of it. It is to be hoped such cases are rare."

"Not so rare as I wish they were, Harry, and I cannot too earnestly beg you to be prayerful and circumspect, or you will add another to the list."

"I would far rather live and die single."

"It would surely be the least of two evils. But there are other points on which I should like to guard you. One is that of making up a sermon on some subject that interests you, and then hanging a text upon it, that has in its real meaning nothing to do with it, only the words are made to answer as a motto for your ideas. Men of abundant talent to expound Scripture profitably, adopt this lame method. For example, I once heard a touching appeal from the words, 'And while thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.' The speaker made not the slightest allusion to the very striking and beautiful circumstances of the parable in the words and actions of the disguised prophet, but only used the words as an

exhortation to his hearers on the duty of faithfulness to the souls of their fellow beings, warning them, lest the opportunity should be lost forever. I must say I doubt whether such a use of the word of God is at all justifiable. Harry, if you have not time or sense to ascertain the true meaning and scope of a passage, let it alone till you can by study and prayer obtain it. And in the meantime content yourself with enforcing some plain, simple precept according to the mind of the Spirit, and prepare yourself with the utmost diligence to understand your text before you attempt to preach from it."

"I have often noticed the error to which you allude, and felt sorry to hear such a perversion of Scripture. There are surely texts to suit every possible discourse that ought to be preached, without twisting the words out of their original meaning."

"To be sure there are. It is only thoughtlessness that causes it. Another error that I hope you will avoid is one that has been charged upon extemporaneous prayers as their natural tendency: that of praying *at* the people. I suppose you have heard of the distinguished gentleman who is said to have made the most eloquent prayer that was ever addressed to a Boston audience. Now, Harry, I believe you are at present very far from anything of this kind. I rejoice that you are; but the example of some of our best and most devoted men might lead you into it before you are aware, if you are not careful. I have heard some of our own conference, and those I dearly love, after preaching a fine discourse, take up and continue the exhortatory part of their sermon in the prayer. This troubles me. When men pray, let them pray and not exhort. I like to have exhortation go hand in hand with exposition, but let prayer and

praise be addressed to the Deity, forgetting as far as possible the very presence of man. 'Tarry ye here, while I go and pray yonder.' "

Thus Mr. Preston continued to counsel his young friend on various subjects connected with his future life, till they reached the Court House. They supped at the house of a neighboring brother, and as the stage was to pass at an early hour, soon retired to bed.

The first streak of light roused Harry from his pillow, and after a hasty toilet, he descended to the front portico, where he found Mr. Preston already awaiting him. They continued to walk up and down in friendly converse till the stage drove up. Then a warm grasp of the hand, a fervent blessing, and Harry was fairly launched on the ocean of life.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE ELDER'S FAMILY.

"Home!—my soul thrills at that beloved word;
How blest are they who know its deepest meaning.
Oh, woman! man may live absorbed in cares,
But knows enjoyment not, without a home,
And that he owes to thee, or never knows.
There, as true wife and mother, thou dost charm
All to right action, with sweet influence,
While hearts grow happy 'neath thy quiet smile.
How dear this picture! Can it be there lives
A woman false to this high destiny!"

THE morning was damp and chilly, so the passengers were content to wrap themselves up in their cloaks and keep a moody silence. Harry was not at all sorry for this, as he felt no inclination to speak himself. His own thoughts furnished him sufficient occupation. Home! his own beloved, beautiful home—his no longer. The idea was keenly painful. Now, for the first time, he fully realized the parting, and his heart yielded to the sickening pang of homesickness. How long he sat buried in gloomy thought he knew not. All the dangers and discomforts of his future life loomed up before him in exaggerated forms, while behind were the pleasures and indulgences of home, with all the endearments of love.

How is this, young soldier? Dost thou shrink at the distant prospect of the conflict. Where is thy courage? Where is thy zeal? Safe—all safe, in the depths of thy steadfast soul. This is only the momentary fainting, the

tenderness that marks thee human. It is past—and Harry rouses himself from his transient weakness, and sends his eye abroad upon the fields that lie before him, already white unto the harvest. His courage falters not, his zeal rekindles, and again in spirit he presses on to take his place upon the walls of Zion.

Then his thoughts went forward to the strange brethren in whose arduous labors he was about to participate, and trembling in view of his own insufficiency, he sought strength in the Omnipotent and wisdom in the Omniscient. Again he was soothed and sustained.

He thought with sympathy of the domestic trials of Mr. Lanning, then of Mr. Preston's cautions to himself, and of his Aunt Rodney's evident desire to unite him with Rose. He wondered that she should imagine Rose would make a suitable wife for a preacher. Still she was certainly very amiable. If she were to become a true Christian, her character would improve and strengthen. Then she would be a blessing to some man. And Susan—gentle Susan. Ah! there was Christian steadiness and firmness united with the most engaging softness. The little Lily of his boyish days. But if he joined the conference, of course he could not marry for years. He had sometimes imagined that Mr. Selden regarded Susan with a deeper interest than ordinary, and he sighed unconsciously as he said to himself, "If that is so, then she will not be the one for me;" and again he almost sighed as he acknowledged to himself that she was just such a wife as Mr. Selden ought to have. He recalled to his mind several others that he had known at Carlisle, but none seemed to possess all the requisites. One after another passed in review and were dismissed; but there were the soft hazel eyes of his sister Lily right before him.

Strange! but there was Mr. Selden too, and he almost wished Mr. Preston had not touched upon the subject. He had nothing to do with marriage, and could not have for four years at least—so Rose, Susan, Mary, Augusta, Lucy, were all laid aside. Only he still wondered whether Mr. Selden was really attached to Susan. As no further light was to be gained upon the topic, he wisely determined to think of it no more, and set himself vigorously to study human nature as it was unfolded before him in his fellow-passengers.

Unfortunately for the young traveller, the volume did not contain sufficient of either interest or instruction to banish more agreeable cogitations, and the monotony of the day was only broken by the changing scenery or the needful stoppings for meals, fresh horses, and the like.

Late in the afternoon they reached the little town of Brookton, the residence of Mr. Lanning, and quite an attractive spot it was, as it lay nestling among the verdant hills, and smiling a welcome to the weary traveller. Harry stopped at the hotel, where he learned the direction to Mr. Lanning's house. After short refreshment, he left his trunk to be called for at another time, and turned his steps thitherward.

After Mr. Preston first proposed to Harry to spend the winter on Long Run circuit, doubts began to arise in his mind whether it was judicious to send one accustomed to refined society, wealth and ease, to encounter the hardships of uncongenial companions, lonely rides, bad roads and mountain storms. Might he not be discouraged at the outset, and return home ready to listen to the wishes of those friends who so reluctantly saw him entering upon the life of an itinerant? Again, he felt sure he knew the material of which Harry was com-

posed, and that he would pass through the ordeal, strengthened and improved. He resolved at any rate that he should not go blindly into the battle; so he diligently presented the darker shades of the prospect till Harry, in consequence, had pictured his new home as a region of barbarism and perpetual winter. The contrast of the reality was an agreeable surprise, and he took quite a stroll through the village before he stopped at the door of Mr. Lanning.

His knock was answered by a boy of about ten years old, whose dirty face was not shamed by any part of his apparel.

"Is Mr. Lanning at home?"

The child stared stupidly in his face a moment, and then without a word of reply, ran off to the back part of the house, calling, "Mar-ther, mar-ther, here's a man wants father."

The street door opened immediately into the room, and in a few moments the young gentleman pushed his head through the opening of the inner door far enough to say, "Mother says you may set down," and again vanished.

Harry obeyed the ungracious permission, and had time to take in another confirmation of Mr. Preston's judgment by a survey of the premises. The mixed air of effort at ornament and untidiness was striking. Gaudy colored prints were hung in irregular positions about the walls, and vases of faded artificial flowers stood upon the mantel. The furniture looked out of date and ill-kept, while the books that were placed in formal attitudes on a centre table, presented a singular assemblage of standard Methodist authors, and trashy light literature woefully soiled and worn. Harry had time to feel the discomfort

of the place before the door again opened to admit Mrs. Lanning herself. She came in in a great flutter, smoothing down her dress, and brushing back a stray lock that hung down on one side of her face. Her costume was in the plainest style of Methodism, but without that exquisite neatness that alone is necessary to make it the most becoming garb in the world.

Harry rose at her entrance and bowed saying, "my name is Bradford, madam."

"Oh dear yes, you are Brother Bradford that Mr. Lanning has been expecting. He'll be very glad to see you. He thought you would come to-day or to-morrow. He's just gone out to see a sick man, but he'll be back soon. Didn't you have a terrible tiresome ride? I always dread it so! I always try to go home once a year, for it is so dismal living away off here! I hope you'll like it better than I do."

Here she stopped, out of breath, and Harry replied that he thought the town and country around looked very pleasant.

"Oh, yes, they look pleasant enough, as you say; but then you know, brother, when a person has been accustomed to live in Baltimore, the change is very great. Mr. Lanning has not been stationed in Baltimore but once since we were married. I do think it is very wrong that conference is so partial to some of the preachers. But, oh dear me! I must not talk so to you, for I suppose you ought to think they never do wrong."

"They no doubt find it difficult to find appointments to suit all," Harry answered with a smile.

"Oh, yes, no doubt they do; but there are some that can always have the best stations. I don't know how it is, but it seems very strange that we should be sent out

here to stay four years. Well, the time is almost out now, and I am thankful for that."

The auditor felt almost as glad as the lady had expressed herself, when this uninteresting scene was terminated by the entrance of Mr. Lanning. He had called at the hotel, and learned the arrival of a handsome young man who had inquired the way to his house. So he hastened home not doubting that it was his expected assistant. He welcomed him as cordially as if they had been old acquaintances, and spoke of Mr. Preston with a warmth of affection that went to Harry's heart, for in his tête-à-tête with Mrs. Lanning, he had felt again the gnawings of homesickness.

His acquaintance in his own church, had thus far been almost exclusively among the intelligent friends of his mother, and a few refined and elevated families in Carlisle. Mrs. Lanning was a specimen of another stamp, and he was again and again obliged to school his rebellious feelings into the remembrance that he came to Long Run circuit, not for the enjoyment of social pleasures but to work in the vineyard of his Lord. If the plants were, some of them, of crooked, unseemly growth, or even barren and unfruitful, there was the more need of faithful laborers to prune and dress them.

Mr. Lanning soon took him away to his own little study, a much more home-like and comfortable looking place than the parlor, though very plainly fitted up. The good man seemed to feel the change of atmosphere himself. As he closed the door, and placed a chair for Harry, his countenance assumed a less anxious, worried expression than it had worn while listening to his wife's complaints about the poor accommodations that she had to offer their guest, contrasting all with the different

state of things when she lived at home, in Baltimore.

Mr. Lanning was about the same age as Mr. Preston, though his spare form, thin silvered hair, and care-marked visage, made him look at least ten years older. They had known each other in boyhood and entered the church at the same time, during a revival at "old Light street." Of course there were many questions to be asked and answered about him. Then the affairs of the circuit must be discussed, which occupied the time till they were summoned to the tea-table. Here the whole family were assembled, and Harry was introduced to the three daughters of his host.

The eldest, Rosalba, was about nineteen, and belied her name by being almost a brunette. She seemed to think it incumbent to put on the airs of a beauty, though she had much less to boast of in that line than her mother must have had at her age. The second, Selina, was not quite sixteen, and had still less of personal attraction than her sister, being of a dingy, sickly yellow complexion, with eyes and hair to match. But the deficiency in both cases was amply made up by a laborious attempt at style in dress. Soiled finery, of ill-assorted colors figured conspicuously. Curls, of course, they must not wear, as they were both of them members of society. It was evident that the Creator had designed to bestow that ornament on them, but the poor locks were twisted and contorted into every variety of shape, except that which nature intended. The youngest of these three graces, Fanny, was thirteen, with a round blooming face, and bright eyes, resembling her mother, but with more intellect in the expression. Bold and hoydenish in her manners, it must be allowed, but

withal, frank and affectionate; still capable of being moulded by judicious management into a strong, useful character.

Fanny seemed in the finest spirits, and voluble on the subject of a nutting expedition in which she had been invited to join. The sisters tried in vain to check the tide of her vivacity by looks of disapprobation and whispered rebukes, as well as expressive glances at *the company*. Finally, an appeal to the higher powers was deemed expedient, and Mrs. Lanning was, after several attempts, induced to pause in her reminiscences of Baltimore, and administer a sedative to Miss Fanny, which would probably have required repetition, had not Master Albert drawn the attention of all to himself by overturning the cream-pitcher as he reached across the waiter to seize the largest baked apple on the dish, before it should be secured by any one else. His mother, fairly aroused by this outbreak, caught his arm, compelling him to drop his fine juicy prize on the tablecloth, to the great amusement of Fanny, who added a loud laugh to the confusion.

"Albert, Albert!" cried Mrs. Lanning. "Why, Mr. Lanning, do you see how Albert is behaving? I really wish you would speak to him. I declare, when you get to talking, you forget everything."

Mr. Lanning had not waited for this conjugal incentive, but was in the act of removing the apples out of the reach of his son, and as soon as he could be heard, he ordered the refractory child to leave the room. The young gentleman knew well that he must obey that voice, but consoled himself by a passion of tears, and slamming the door as he departed. The weak mother, unable to bear the grief of her darling, whispered her

eldest daughter to follow him, and tell him, that if he would not cry, she would save his apple for him and he should have as much gingerbread as he wanted.

All this was so new to Harry, so unlike anything he was accustomed to that he could scarcely command his attention to the discourse of Mr. Lanning, for wonder at the strange inconsistency of such proceedings with a profession of Christianity. He felt it a relief when the repast was over and his host proposed that they should call on the wife of the preacher in charge of the circuit, Mr. Temple. He was absent at this time in another part of the field, but as quarterly meeting was to commence on Saturday, he was expected home the next day.

As they slowly sauntered along, Mr. Lanning again expressed his satisfaction that Mr. Temple would have an assistant.

"The truth is, Brother Bradford," he continued, "the duties on this district are not altogether play. Long Run circuit is not he worst that we have, but you will find it very different from the kind of life that you have been accustomed to, I fear," and he turned an anxious gaze upon the elegant young man at his side, with some misgivings lest Mr. Preston had sent him the wrong person; but yet he had great confidence in his friend's judgment and knowledge of the work. Harry met his eye with a grave smile, saying,

"Of course it is impossible to tell what kind of soldier I shall make till I have been tried, but I have at least youth and health to commence with. I hope I shall not disappoint your expectations, sir."

"Well, well, we shall see, my dear brother," and again he looked at him, saying with a kindly smile, as he laid his hand on his shoulder, "You have certainly a pretty

good frame, and we must look about and find you a good stout horse. Mary Temple will be glad to see you. She has been in great trouble for fear her husband should break down with his extra labor since brother Stanly went home."

"I think you say Mrs. Temple is from Baltimore, sir," said Harry, inwardly dreading to encounter another specimen of Mrs. Lanning's class.

"Yes, poor child, and as tenderly raised as any house plant. But she is a good girl, and makes a true-hearted wife for James. I baptized her, took her into the church, and married her. She is like my own child, and I feel her privations keenly, though she never complains."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PARSONAGE.

"'Tis home where'er the heart is
Where'er its living treasures dwell;
In cabin or in princely hall,
In forest haunt or hermit's cell."

As Mr. Lanning and Harry drew near the little cottage home of Mr. Temple, Harry had time to take an observation of the premises. The house was sheltered on the north under the lee of a pretty high and steep wooded hill. Some trees of native growth were near enough to shower down their summer robes upon the lowly roof. It consisted of three rooms only, with a kind of half finished loft above and a shed that answered for a kitchen in summer and a wood-house in winter. A tiny grass plot with a border of gay autumnal flowers, filled up the inclosure in front. In the rear a vegetable garden stretched itself to the very rocks at the base of the hill, whose rugged sides formed the only fence in that direction.

The evening was warm for the season, and through the open door, they caught the low notes of a hymn, sung by the young mother, "to the babe half slumbering on her knee," while a boy of about two years old was stretched upon the carpet beside her, rolling about in the unrestrained comfort of night clothes.

Everything was neat, and if not what dwellers in a

city would call comfortable, at least all available means had been used to make as near an approach to it as possible. Mrs. Temple was a slender, delicate woman, scarcely more than a child in appearance, as Harry thought, when he afterwards obtained a view of her pale but bright face.

Though she sat with her back to the entrance, she seemed to recognize Mr. Lanning's step, while Harry lingered at the door. She held up her face to receive the fatherly kiss, saying:

"Uncle Lanning! When did you get home? I am so glad to see you."

"I am glad to see you, my child, but must confess that I have been at home since yesterday noon. I have been too busy to come and see you before, but you must not scold me, for I have brought brother Bradford with me, and I know you will be glad of that."

Mrs. Temple immediately rose and turned towards the door, as Harry came forward to receive her cordial welcome. With a slight but graceful embarrassment she invited her guests to be seated while she took the sleeping babe into the adjoining room. But the unusual movements and sounds had roused the little creature from its imperfect slumber, and she brought it back again wide awake.

"There now, Mary," exclaimed Mr. Lanning, "I suppose we have done mischief, for I know mothers do not like to have the babies waked up. And here is Jemmie, too, who seems to be in trim for going to roost. You will not thank me for this visit."

"Oh, yes, I will," she answered with an engaging smile, "baby will sleep all the better for being awake a little longer, and Jemmie seems very well satisfied with his accommodations."

In fact the little rogue had climbed upon Mr. Lanning's knee, and in answer to Harry's silent invitation was evidently inclined to add another to the list of his friends. It was not long before the winning aspect of the new candidate gained a complete victory, and he was transferred to Harry, who found time in the intervals of conversation, by gentle words and caresses, to seal the treaty of amity, and when a neat colored girl, just returned from an errand, came to take him, he clasped his arms round the neck of his new playmate, crying out in his imperfect language:

"No, no, Jemmie no seepy—Jemmie no seepy."

Mrs. Temple finding Harry quite as willing to keep him as he was to stay, gave up her own charge to the girl instead.

They conversed upon the illness of Mr. Stanley and other subjects for some time, and again and again the young wife, with softened eyes, expressed her thankfulness that her husband was to have help. Even Harry's strong heart could not but tremble at the recollection of his inexperience, when his friends thus seemed to lean upon him. But he knew that if they rested on him in his weakness, he had an arm of almighty strength to sustain him. Otherwise he would have fainted at the threshold.

As they returned in the deepening twilight, neither seemed inclined to talk. Mr. Lanning, from habit as well as the pressure of the care of the churches; Harry, from the thronging thoughts induced by his new position. The difference of the two homes into which he had looked during the few last hours was striking. Mrs. Temple's graceful refined manners and conversation contrasting so strongly with the homeliness of her abode

was a new phase of society to him. If her family were in comfortable circumstances, why did they not impart some of it to her? He put the question at last to his silent companion, and received for answer that her father had, since her marriage, met with some reverses in his business, and that he had a large family to support and educate.

"But, my young brother," he continued with a smile, "you have a few chapters yet to learn respecting the itinerant life. Suppose Mary's father should furnish her house for her with all the comforts that she was accustomed to in her childhood; how would it do to have to transport all that lumber about the conference, from one mountain circuit to another, every year or two? Oh, no, Mary has too much sense for that. When she cast in her lot with a Methodist preacher, she knew that she must turn her back on city nick-nacks. A brave girl she is, and nobody hears her complain. If her husband and children are well, and the work of the Lord prospers, she asks no more."

Harry noticed the tone in which the last words were uttered, as well as the sigh that ended them, and forbore even to look at the speaker. He wished all wives were like sweet Mary Temple. They proceeded the rest of the way silently, each engaged in his own meditations. Harry smiled at the idea of his Aunt Rodney's favorite schemes for him, and wondered how Rose's gay spirit would brook such privations and so humble a home. Was she capable of an affection strong enough to encounter such a life? He feared not, and his mind wandered again over the circle of his young associates, but failed to realize among them another Mary Temple, till the image of Susan presented itself—there was a per-

fect counterpart, and he wished they could become acquainted, they would be sure to like each other. The theme was pleasant, and his thoughts wandered on, enjoying every step, till suddenly Mr. Selden appeared unbidden in the scene. Harry felt that his presence was unwelcome, and ashamed of such treachery to his friend, he turned from the picture, and entered into conversation with Mr. Lanning on the subject of his horse. It was arranged that they should devote a part of the next day to that object.

They found the female part of the family in the parlor, but soon adjourned to the study, as several of the official members, having heard the rapidly spreading news of the arrival of the new preacher, had dropped in to make his acquaintance. Harry found them all friendly in their reception of him, and from their conversation began to feel an increasing interest in his future work. One of them, Mr. Jacobs, learning that Harry was in quest of a horse, offered his services to assist, as he thought he knew of one or two that would suit him.

The next morning he appeared, according to agreement, leading a horse for Harry, and they started together for a ride of several miles to the farm of a person who raised horses for the market. As Mr. Lanning was necessarily so much from home, and Mr. Jacobs had offered to act as guide, he was released from his engagement to accompany them. They visited one or two places before they found an animal that in every way answered the requirements. When the choice was at last made, the owner agreed to send him in to Mr. Lanning's on Monday morning. Harry was to ride him once round the circuit before the bargain was concluded.

In the afternoon Mr. Temple reached home, and came

at once to see his new colleague. James Temple was not, on first acquaintance, just such a man as Harry had imaged in his own mind, for the husband of the lovely woman that he had visited the previous evening. He was a fine specimen of bold, vigorous manhood, but by no means a sentimental hero. Rapid and decided in all his movements, he often appeared abrupt, almost rough in conversation, till a glance at his open honesty of countenance and laughing eyes corrected the error. Of an elastic, joyous temperament, it required all his sincere piety, together with the sweet, gentle dignity of his idolized Mary, to restrain his exuberant spirits within the bounds of strict ministerial decorum.

His presence always seemed to throw a kind of gilding over Mr. Lanning's saddened features, for he knew his solid excellence of character, and looked with a pensive smile upon one who had not had the spirit of youth and joy crushed out of him by the burden of cares and vexations that should have been borne or averted by others.

His approach was heralded by a burst of laughter from Fanny, whom he encountered at the door, and with whom he was an especial favorite. After conversing a moment with her, he came into the study, where Harry was reading alone. So entirely different was he from Harry's preconceived idea, that he did not for a moment think of Mr. Temple till he announced himself, and with a cordial grasp of the hand, declared his pleasure in seeing him.

"Brother Bradford," he exclaimed, "I am delighted to see you, and thank you most heartily for coming to help me. I should have had a hard winter of it alone, and my poor wife a worse one, and even then been under the necessity of leaving half the wants of the circuit un-

attended to." He paused, and with a quick but comprehensive glance at his young assistant, resumed: "You have had no experience of circuit riding, I believe. Do you think you can hold out till conference?"

Harry smiled, but with an air of perplexity, as he replied: "It is impossible for me to say till I have tried it. I know of no reason why I should not be able to do what others have done. I do not consider myself delicate, and yet Brother Lanning seems to feel the same doubts about me that you do. I confess I am at a loss to understand the difficulty."

Mr. Temple smiled in his turn, saying, "Surely not delicate, in the sense of sickly, with such a frame and color as yours; but"—he hesitated, looked embarrassed, and then broke into a hearty laugh as he added—"The trouble is, my dear fellow, that we backwoodsmen are not accustomed to see any one so refined and elegant as you city people are. You look too aristocratic for log-cabin life, and you will find nothing else in some parts of the circuit. But excuse me—my blunt speech troubles you."

"Only for a moment," replied Harry; and this time there was nothing to dim the frank brightness of his smile. "I cannot suppose that I possess any alarming amount of the quality you mention. You mistake me altogether. I am not from the city, but a veritable country boy. If there is any superfluous nonsense about my exterior, I trust it will speedily wear off."

"Oh, no. That is not my meaning. It is not external exactly, and I am not sure that I should like to have it wear off. But I really fear you will find the life of a Methodist preacher out here among the mountains, very different from your past experience."

"For that I am prepared; but I have deliberately made it my choice, and with the Divine assistance, I hope to have grace to persevere." And with the words came a rush of generous enthusiasm that lighted up cheek, brow and eye.

Mr. Temple's heart glowed in sympathy with the faithful but modest boldness of the young soldier of the cross, and again grasping his hand, he exclaimed with fervor: "The Lord grant it, my dear brother; I do not doubt you. And if we do go forth to our arduous labors, weeping, may we bear the precious seed, and together come again with rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us."

They continued to converse upon subjects connected with the various interests of the church, its wants in their own particular field, and the means in their power to meet those wants. Harry also found that Mr. Temple had graduated at Dickenson but three years before he entered, and recollected hearing his name often among the students. These reminiscences added another bond of union to those already formed, and when Mr. Temple rose to return home, he insisted upon taking Harry with him, to which he readily assented; for he rather dreaded encountering another scene like that of the previous evening, especially as Mr. Lanning might not be present to control the disorderly elements of which his family was composed.

Everything at the parsonage was sunshiny in its aspect, from its lovely mistress down to its minutest domestic arrangement, and was evidently called upon to do its utmost for the comfort of its weary master and his guest. The baby crowed and stretched its little arms to papa, and was soon nestling in his bosom, while Jemmie

frolicked around him, sometimes climbing up to share his caresses with the little one, and then renewing his artless lures to catch the attention of Harry, who was by no means slow in meeting his advances.

Mrs. Temple soon invited them to their simple, but delicately prepared repast, and the evening passed quickly away, leaving Harry perfectly satisfied with his colleague, and increasingly anxious to prove himself able and willing to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XXXI.

QUARTERLY MEETING.

"The love of Christ doth me constrain
To seek the wandering souls of men;
With cries, entreaties, tears, to save,
To snatch them from the gaping grave.
For this let men revile my name,
No cross I shun; I fear no shame;
All hail reproach, and welcome pain,
Only thy terrors, Lord, restrain.
My life, my blood, I here present,
If for thy truth they may be spent;
Fulfill thy sovereign counsel, Lord!
Thy will be done, thy name adored!"

The next day brought quarterly conference, and all its details were interesting to Harry, as bringing him into close acquaintance with the sphere of his new duties, as well as with the more prominent brethren with whom he was temporarily to labor. On returning, he was cheered by the reception of letters from home, and though they were written too soon after his departure to contain any particular news, they gave him the assurance that all were well and longing to hear from him.

In the evening he listened with lively interest to a sermon from Mr. Temple, full of sound sense and Gospel sweetness. The love-feast was held in the morning before the usual service. The majority of the village were Methodists, and with the numbers that poured in from the surrounding country, the little church was filled to its utmost capacity.

It was a scene that stirred the very depths of Harry's heart, and when Mr. Lanning had made a few remarks, and introduced him to the audience in his appropriate character, he rose to address them. He stood for a moment silent and nearly overwhelmed with his own emotions. So many immortal beings to whom he was required to dispense the bread of life, and he so young, so inexperienced. A brief expression of these feelings, and of his desire to sit at the feet of his fathers and mothers in Israel, that he might learn how to go in and out before this people, was as much as his throbbing heart and swimming eyes would permit, and he sat down, to cover his face and pray for strength to perform the high and holy functions to which he was called.

His noble countenance, the sweet subdued tones of his voice, thrilling with a lofty sensibility, and above all, the strain of fervent self-devotion, joined with so becoming a humility, that pervaded every look and word, touched the hearts of his hearers; and as one after another rose to speak of the dealings of God with their own souls, scarcely one failed to respond to the appeal of their young minister with warm enthusiasm, or tender sympathy. It was a solemn and profitable occasion, and although Mrs. Lanning spoke at length of her high attainments in the divine life, closing with a prolonged shout that for some time suspended the progress of the exercises, even that unhallowed boasting, too common it must be confessed on such occasions, could not interrupt the tide of peace and joy that filled Harry's soul. The love that hopeth all things, believeth all things, cast its broad mantle over what might otherwise have jarred upon his feelings, turning harmony to discord.

Mr. Lanning filled the pulpit in the morning, and

although his doctrine was sound, and his piety undoubted, his preaching did not take hold of the hearts of his hearers. He seemed to labor to declare his message, but like a man in fetters, could only advance with pain to himself as well as his hearers. And yet so entirely was he respected by all who knew him, that he was listened to with affectionate respect if not with enjoyment.

A local preacher from a neighboring circuit was to preach in the afternoon, and Harry at night. The newness of his position, and the unusual excitement of his feelings in the morning, made him tremble at the prospect, for though not unused to addressing an audience, in his excursions with Mr. Preston, here it was different. He belonged for the time to this people, and he could not but feel that some criticism would mingle with the devotional attention of his hearers. But Mr. Temple kindly came to his relief.

Soon after dinner, that gentleman appeared at Mr. Lanning's, and finding Harry surrounded by friends, all anxious to become acquainted with their interesting new preacher, adroitly managed to withdraw him from the circle. He told him that he was obliged to drive a few miles to visit a sick lady, and was going to take him with him.

As soon as they started, he said, "Now, Brother Bradford, I know just how you feel in all this confusion, and I have brought you off to rest. You are not to speak a word unless you choose, and when you go home, mind that you lie down and try to sleep."

Harry laughed, but remonstrated against still being considered so delicate.

"But this being made a show-beast of—excuse me—is enough to demolish the very king of beasts himself. Lean

back in that corner, and do not speak a word, while I let you into a little secret. The fact is, I am favored with a special guardian angel of my own, and I begin to suspect that she spreads her wing over you to some extent. At any rate, I am acting under her orders in taking you away from these folks, who, in their kindness of heart, have no more discretion than to finish you at your first appearance among them."

"I am much indebted to your guardian angel for her thoughtful regard to my comfort, and all the more that it so vividly recalls the watchful tenderness of my own."

"Oh, ho! So you have a guardian angel of your own, have you?" and his quizzical glance was turned upon his companion, but changed instantly as it met the soft serious one that accompanied the reply.

"Yes, a guardian angel who has watched over me, and prayed for me, ever since I was born—and to whom, under God, I owe all I am or ever shall be that is not utterly worthless."

"Ah, my dear fellow, that is the best kind of angel for you at present. But as she is not on the spot to take care of you now, I must lend you a little bit of mine. In sober English, my Mary, with her usual tact and Christian kindness, saw that you looked tired, and would be likely to get no rest by your own efforts. So she suggested that I should steal you away."

This pleasant explanation gratefully received, little more was said till they reached the place of their destination.

The lady they came to visit had long been an active member of the church they served, and was now near the termination of her useful life. Consumption was

slowly but surely wasting her away. They found her sitting up, supported by pillows, in great feebleness of body, but strong in spirit, rejoicing in hope. She extended her emaciated hand to greet her pastor, with manifest affection and joy. When he presented Harry to her, she held his hand a moment while she gazed in his face, then motioning him to a seat by her side, she said—

"The Lord bless you, my dear young brother, and make you a blessing to these dear people, with whom I am so soon to be numbered no more."

She passed her hand over her glistening eyes, and with a faint smile, added, "Do not suppose that I am not willing and happy to go. These tears are only the result of extreme weakness, and a yearning tenderness for my dear brothers and sisters, with whom I have so long taken sweet counsel and walked to the house of God. I rejoice that my pilgrimage is so near its termination. The land of rest appears pleasant to me. I hope to see you all there."

Then turning to Mr. Temple, she said, "Now sing to me, dear brother, and I shall rest."

Mr. Temple immediately commenced, without the aid of book—

"And let this feeble body fail,
And let it faint or die;
My soul shall quit this mournful vale,
And soar to worlds on high:
Shall join the disembodied saints,
And find its long-sought rest;
That only bliss for which it pants,
In the Redeemer's breast.

"In hope of that immortal crown
I now the cross sustain;

And gladly wander up and down,
And smile at toil and pain.
I suffer on my threescore years,
Till my Deliverer come,
And wipe away his servant's tears,
And take his exile home.

"Oh what hath Jesus bought for me!
Before my ravished eyes,
Rivers of life divine I see,
And trees of Paradise.
I see a world of spirits bright,
Who taste the pleasures there!
They all are robed in spotless white,
And conquering palms they bear.

"Oh, what are all my sufferings here,
If, Lord, thou count me meet,
With that enraptured host to appear,
And worship at thy feet.
Give joy or grief, give ease or pain,
Take life or friends away;
But let me find them all again
In that eternal day,"

Harry joined his rich voice, and the dying saint accompanied them with animated look and gesture through every line of the beautiful hymn. Mr. Temple then offered a prayer of mingled supplication and praise, and they took their leave, Harry promising to repeat the visit often, when he was in that part of the circuit, while she lived.

This visit to the confines of the eternal world, had already done much to tranquillize Harry's feelings, and he found the retirement of his own room all that was necessary to prepare him physically for the sacred duties

of the evening. He was enabled to address the people with a degree of liberty and unction from above, that effectually banished the fear of criticism, and that more than met the expectations of his hearers. And thus ended the first quarterly meeting of his ministerial career.

CHAPTER XXXII.

STYLISH METHODISM.

"Wherever in the world we are,
In whatsoe'er estate,
We have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate;
And a work of holy love to do,
For the Lord on whom we wait."

Punctual to the agreement, Harry's horse was brought in early the next morning, and by consulting the plan of the circuit, he found that the next preaching place was but a few miles from Brookton. He was expected to preach in the forenoon and ride to the next appointment, about ten miles farther, either in the afternoon or the next day, whichever suited his convenience. Several persons from that neighborhood had attended the quarterly meeting at Brookton, and remained all night in the village, so that he had plenty of company. One of them took him to his own house, where he was kindly received by the family, and everything necessary for his refreshment amply provided. Invitations to dinner were pressed upon him from all quarters, but the kind friends with whom he stopped in the morning had taken care to secure him, so that with blushing surprise at finding himself of so much importance, he could only promise to visit them all in turn.

He had never before found himself dependent on the

hospitality of strangers. Heretofore when he had left home it was either to visit intimate friends, or a hotel was the most natural place of sojourn, and he felt almost as if intruding where he had no claim. But this feeling was soon lost in the welcome everywhere extended to the eloquent and captivating young preacher.

His new friends would not hear of his leaving their neighborhood till the following afternoon, and then only in time to reach the next appointment before night. He found them in general, plain, sensible people, living in great comfort upon the produce of their own farms, enjoying the means of grace within their reach, and ready to extend the blessings of religion, according to their ability, to others less favored than themselves. Not till it was really necessary would they consent to part with him. Even the servants seemed to strive with each other who should wait upon him, and boys with bright eyes and white teeth, that reminded him of his old playmates, Pete and Joe, were ever ready to fly at the slightest hint that he would like to have his horse brought out, or put up again. It was a great pleasure to him to visit them in their quarters, and listen to their simple narratives of joys and sorrows incident alike to every condition of human life. Often he pleased himself by tracing resemblances either of person or character to those he had left at his far distant home, and on whom he looked as faithful friends.

Thus far, circuit riding wore rather an attractive aspect. The weather was delightful, and the country bright with all the varied hues of autumn. The heart of the youthful missionary glowed with thankfulness that his lot had been cast among a people so kind and hospitable, so willing to receive from his unpractised lips the

message of salvation, and also trembled with prayerful solicitude that he might be made the honored instrument of saving souls.

When the hour came for him to leave and journey on alone, he felt almost sad, for he could not conceive that he should find others as kind, as forbearing to his youth and inexperience as those he left. Still he faltered not; for was he not about his Master's business?

His road lay through a beautiful farming district, and although the harvests were mostly gathered in, yet his eye, quick to discern skillful management, was often gratified by the neatness and good order that prevailed, and especially was he pleased when he noticed the negroes well clothed and their habitations comfortable.

The glories of the autumn woods were always a source of keen delight to him, and now as they presented themselves in connection with the grandeur of mountain scenery, far more bold than that about his own home, as he still fondly called it, he repeatedly stopped his horse to drink in the wonders of the panorama. Gradually ascending, the view became more extensive, and his immediate surroundings more wild and romantic. Could he but have called to his side some of the beloved inmates of Hunter's Lodge, or its neighborhood, to partake with him, his enjoyment would have been complete. The sun went down in the midst of golden clouds, leaving the air sensibly cooled, and as twilight began to veil the gorgeous scene, the young traveller was not unwilling to terminate his ride at Altamont, his next resting place, the residence of Mr. Garner.

This proved to be a mansion of considerable pretensions to architectural beauty. Passing through a long avenue, a gate admitted him to a finely shaded lawn,

kept in exquisite order. A negro man was carefully removing the falling leaves, and saluted him with a respectful bow, but suffered him to pass on towards the house alone. As he drew nearer, a boy appeared to relieve him of the trouble of fastening his horse, and answering the question whether Mr. Garner was at home in the affirmative, he disappeared. In the same formal style he was received by another servant at the door, and ushered into a parlor furnished with all that wealth and taste could supply to make it comfortable, among which a fine blazing fire was at present most acceptable to Harry.

He had sent his name by a servant, and a moment after Mr. Garner made his appearance, giving orders as he approached to have Mr. Bradford's horse put up. He had learned that a young man by that name had come on to the circuit to supply Mr. Stanley's place. His reception was in a high degree courtly and dignified; but as he scrutinized the appearance and bearing of his guest, it gradually warmed into cordiality.

Mr. Garner was, at least in his own estimation, a person of some consequence. Possessed of a large estate, he had married a lady who was left, at the death of her parents, sole proprietor of a fine farm adjoining his own. How far the advantage of uniting the two estates enhanced the charms of the fair heiress, cannot now be decided, but at the time the marriage was a fertile topic for tea-table gossip.

Mrs. Garner's relatives had long been influential members of the Methodist church, and looked with marked coolness upon the attentions of her gay suitor, till, during a revival that occurred in the neighborhood, he became serious, and finally joined the church. No further

opposition being made, he obtained the prize, if such it was.

Mr. and Mrs. Garner remained in the church, and always made a point of having their house considered the "preacher's home." Mr. Stanley had been often with them, and detained by his failing health for longer periods than ordinary. His fine mind and gentlemanly character made him so agreeable an inmate that their disappointment was proportionably great when he was compelled to retire from the field. Several that had occupied the place before him had been of a different stamp, and the Garners, but for the credit of Virginia hospitality, always illustrated at Altamont, would have passed them over to other entertainers. Now, having merely heard that the temporary successor to their friend was a young man, not even a member of the conference, they expected nothing else than another verdant, gawky youth, and determined to receive him so coolly as to induce him to choose other quarters.

A few moments' conversation with Harry sufficed to correct this misapprehension, and accordingly Mr. Garner shone forth the most genial of hosts. The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Garner, their two children and a young sister of Mrs. Garner, who was living with them. Mrs. Garner was summoned, and with her blandest smiles, welcomed the worthy successor of Mr. Stanley.

The ample board was soon spread, and Harry found himself as elaborately attended to as was agreeable. But in the midst of all this there was a degree of ceremony, an effort at entertainment, that chilled him. He was treated with profound respect, called "*Mr. Bradford*," and even "*my dear sir*." He was punctiliously conversed with instead of being sometimes left free to

choose his own occupation. Even the children, with whom he could always find companionship, were secluded in the nursery. He missed the simple heart-warm "brother," the affectionate familiarity of the friends he had left. His hosts certainly did not disguise their admiration of his preaching, but it was expressed in a tone of flattery, and exultation that it was "*our preacher*," accompanied by frequent references and comparisons with others on adjoining circuits, rather than by that searching of heart and feeding on the word, that he desired to produce.

Harry left them, however, more displeased with himself than with them. It was not in his nature to express more than he felt, and he jealously questioned himself, whether he had responded to their kindness as he ought. Again, on the other hand, had he not permitted a little self-complacency to creep in with the many expressions of commendation, not to be sure addressed to him, but which he unavoidably heard, "Splendid looking," "Eloquent," "Well read," "Devotedly pious," etc., etc. Now, left to his own thoughts, he found much wherewith to accuse himself, and some miles had been passed over before the grandeur of the scenery could win him from his bitter feeling of self-condemnation. Severely he questioned himself, and firmly he passed judgment upon the errors of the few past days. Then he found what so many had learned before, that the saddle might become a better closet than even the retirement of a room, "with all the appliances and means to boot."

Harry gave little heed to the beauties of nature as he wound slowly up the side of the mountain, and yet they, no doubt, contributed their part in calming his perturbed spirit, silently breathing into his heart the love, as well

as the power that made them. Thankful that his own weakness had thus in time been made known to him, he humbly applied to the ever open fountain, received an answer of peace, and went on his way rejoicing in a prayer-hearing, covenant-keeping God.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A TOUCH OF YANKEEISM.

"Breathe in contrition's anguished breast
The calm of sins forgiven;
Point the fear-bowed, the guilt-oppressed,
To mercy, grace, and Heaven."

THE country now began to change. The large, finely cultivated fields gave place to long reaches of exhausted lands and rocky pastures, scarcely affording a support to the few cattle that grazed them. Here and there a comfortless homestead presented itself, surrounded by half-tilled patches of ground, into which the hungry sheep and cows strayed at will. Harry began to think that he was entering upon log-cabin life indeed, but consulting his plan from time to time, he pressed on. As he was about turning into the one of two roads indicated by his directions, he thought he heard a voice proceeding from the other. He looked back, and saw a woman making sundry demonstrations towards him, as well as screaming against the wind. Turning his horse, he approached the spot where she stood.

"Beg your pardon, sir," she commenced, "but when I see you coming up the road, I guessed you might be the preacher as comes along here sometimes; but, ye see, I guess I was mistaken. Or be you a preacher, sure enough?"

"I am not the person you were expecting, ma'am, but

you are not altogether mistaken. My business in this part of the country is to preach the Gospel, and if I can in any way be of service to you, I am glad."

"Wal, ye see, I can't tell no how, whether ye can or can't. But ef ye'll jest light down a spell, and come in out o' the wind, I guess I'll talk to you."

Harry did as he was desired, smiling to himself as he fastened his horse to the fence, at this new specimen of character. The old woman stepped briskly before him into a room where everything, though bearing the stamp of poverty, was in perfect neatness and order, so far as the thrift of woman could make it so, but exhibiting in some respects the want of a man's stronger hand.

Gently closing a door that communicated with an inner room, she lowered her voice almost to a whisper, saying, "Take a cheer, sir, and sit up to the fire; it's right daoun snappin' up here in these ere mountains."

Harry thanked her and accepted the offered civility, while the old woman continued: "Wal, ye see, sir—but what might yer name be?" Receiving the desired information, she proceeded: "Bradford, is it? Wal, mine's Hardy; so now we know what to call one another. Wal, to make a long story short, my son Jack—he is in there"—pointing to the door of the inner room, "and he's sick. He thinks he's despert bad—p'r'aps he is—but any how, I'd as lieves he'd think so, if it'll ony do him good. I'm his mother, sir, and I want to see him doin' well in the world, though I can't say I like his goins on here lately. But that's neither here nor there. Nobody'll deny but what I've worked and slaved night and day, many a long year since his father was put in the ground, poor man, to fetch him up, and now to see him brought to this!"

Here she stopped and vehemently wiped her face, while Harry expressed his sympathy with her trouble. But she was not going to be conquered so, and winking away the pertinacious drops, she started again:

"Wal, ye see, sir, he took sick last week, and he's been a gittin wus ever sense. Now he's dreadful sceered, and he told Nancy—that's his wife—that ef she wouldn't take on so, she might ask the preacher—Mr. Stanley, I think they call him—to come and see him. I've been on the lookout all day yesterday and to-day for him. Now I don't know whether he'll see anybody else, for he took a likin' to Mr. What's-his-name—yes, Stanley. He wouldn't have nothin' to do with t'other one, but he used to go to Methodist meetin' last spring, and we all thought he had e'en a most got religion. But some how he got in with the old set, and its all come to nothin'."

Here Harry again found a chance to speak, and remarked that he was a Methodist.

"Oh, wal, be ye? Then I guess you'll do as well as t'other, 'cause he's powerful sceered now. Any how, I'll go see. You stay here till I come back."

Harry began to feel much interested in the circumstances of this case, and hoped he might indeed be useful. He could hear a low murmur of voices in the next room, and sometimes a groan from the sick man. Presently the mother reappeared and beckoned him into the inner room. He found the son evidently in great distress, but whether of body or mind, or both, he could not decide. He had yielded to the entreaties of his wife and mother to see the preacher, but now seemed to be completely abashed. After holding out his hand to meet the friendly salute of Harry, he turned his face to the wall and seemed in too much pain to answer his inquiries. After a few

general observations, Harry asked him if he could listen to prayer. To this he assented, and lay perfectly still, except a suppressed groan occasionally, while his case was tenderly but faithfully laid before the mercy-seat. When Harry took his hand again at parting, he turned his face towards him, attempting to speak, but his parched and quivering lips refused to form the words. He turned away again, but it was plain that his expression was softened, and his groans were mingled with sobs.

On their return to the other room, a few questions from Harry, again put the old woman into the full tide of talk.

"Wal, ye see, sir, when my husband died he left me the little place up in Vermont where we lived, and two helpless boys to bring up. Wal, I scuffled along as well as I could, and managed to give them pretty good school larnin'. My oldest boy, Ethan—he was named after old Ethan Allen. May be ye've heerd of him. My husband thought all the world o' him. Wal, nothin' would do but he must take a notion of goin' to sea. Oh dear, I couldn't do nothin' with him, and Master Moody, —he's the man that had the school that year—he talked to him, but it warnt no use, so he said I might jest as well let him go, for if I didn't, he raly believed he'd run away, his head was so sot on it. He'd jest got the bit in his teeth, and it warnt no manner o' use to try to stop him. So I jest had to fix him up the best way I could, and set him off. Wal, that was the e'end of him, poor boy, for he took the fever, out there in the West Ingies, and died."

After a pause, and some more hard winking, while her auditor again expressed his sympathy, she proceeded:

After that, ye see, sir, I kinder lost my sperrit, and things went hard with us. Jack he'd taken a notion to get married, and he knowed he was too poor to think on't. So after considering a spell, he says—says he, 'Mother, I have a notion to go down south, where the winters aint so awful hard, it takes all we can get in the summer to keep us along in the winter.' Wal, I thought o' poor Ethan, and I tried to put it out of his head, but 'twarnt no use, my boys allers had a will o' their own, like their father, poor man. So he came out here and managed to git a place as overseer on Mr. Kinton's farm down there in the valley. He done considerable well at fust, and got good wages, and then he would have us—that's Nancy and me, come out here, and then they could get married. I didn't see no other way for 'em to do, poor young things, so I sold the old place, which warnt worth much to be sure, but little as it was, it's all we've got to live on now."

"Has your son no employment now, Mrs. Hardy?"

"Wal, ye see, sir, I was jest a goin' to tell ye. Mr. Kinton had several sons, and they was pretty high fellows. So Jack, he thinks it was a fine thing to go on frolicks too. I told him he mustn't think of copying after them, but he'd got a goin', with a set of head-foremost kind o' youngsters, not that he was ever what you'd call a drunkard, but he liked to go ranting around the country, and neglectin' his business. Wal, Mr. Kinton used to talk to him about his doin's, and then he'd hold off a little, but it didn't last long, and he'd git agoin' agin as bad as ever. Wal, so it went on, and long and last, Mr. Kinton would'nt put up with it no longer. It was no more'n was natral, and he lost his place jest as I calculated he would. Wal, that sort o' sobered him down

for a spell, and we took this old shackley barn of a place that nobody else wouldn't live in, and we've managed to keep along; but how it will turn out when winter sets in, I'm sure is more'n I can tell."

"How long since was it that your son became interested in religion, Mrs. Hardy?" asked Harry.

"Oh, that was along in the spring, pretty soon after he lost his place. There was that young man that used to come up the mountain to preach sometimes, that he took a notion to. But he stopped coming—some said he was sick. I don't know; but when I see you coming up the road, I hoped it might be him; but as soon as you turned your face round I knowed it warnt, for he used to look sort o' pale and sickly. You have pretty good health, sir, haint ye?"

"Yes, ma'am, thus far I am highly favored in that respect."

"Wal, you'd oughter if you'r a comin' up this mountain in the winter. I don't see but what it's e'en a most as bad as the Green Mountains for the matter o' wind, only the snow aint so deep and don't last so awful long. Wal, as I was a sayin', that sickly young man, he stopped a comin', and sometimes they didn't have no preachin' at the meetin's, and Jack, he got slack about goin'. He said they all made such long prayers over there, and talked so prosy, he was tired o' hearin' 'em."

Just then the door opened, and young Mrs. Hardy came out, weeping, and saying that her husband kept talking and tossing about, and took no notice of anything. Harry accompanied the mother to the bedside, where they found him half sleeping and half delirious from the increasing fever. He inquired at what time they expected the visit of the doctor.

"Lor sakes, sir!" replied the mother, "we havn't sent for no doctor. We couldn't calculate on paying him if he come, and we've got nobody to go more'n three miles after him nuther."

"Where does he live?"

"Wal, he lives, I've heerd say, over there in the village, just a little way down t'other side; and I guess he's got enough ridin' about to do, without tending folks as haint got nothin' to pay."

"Does he live in Union?"

"Yes, that's the name of the village."

Harry made no further comment, but took leave, promising to call again in a day or two. Union was his next preaching place, and he rode on at a rapid pace, his mind excited and busy with benevolent plans for relieving in some degree the distress that had so touched his heart. In the enthusiasm of youthful ardor, he saw poor Jack restored to health, a better man, and again employed in such a way as to make his family comfortable.

The little collection of houses called Union lay on the opposite slope of the mountain, and as Harry had been so long detained at Mrs. Hardy's he barely reached the highest point in time to catch the last gleam of sunshine, and to feast on the surrounding beauties.

Beneath him lay the little sheltered valley, now veiled in soft twilight, while the tops of the various mountains, stretching irregularly away to the right and left, were, like the spot on which he now stood, bathed in a flood of golden light. He gazed in silent admiration till the shadow of the opposite peak crept coldly over him, still leaving others, more elevated, robed in glory. Earnestly, insatiably he gazed, oppressed with the wealth of beauty

and magnificence lavished on every side, with a vague longing to drink in such draughts that he might take it with him, but at the same time deeply sensible that finite man is incapable of receiving more than a small portion even of this slight revelation of the Infinite.

Reluctantly, and with many an upturned glance, he descended towards the spot where lay the indications of man's abode. Man, poor man! so insignificant in appearance among these mighty works of nature, and yet so immeasurably more important, as holding the priceless jewel of immortality. Thus led to the contemplation of his mission and of his powerlessness in and of himself to accomplish it, with a humbled, prayerful spirit, Harry drew near the place of his temporary sojourn.

His first thought after reciprocating the warm greeting of his host, Mr. Bladen, and his family, was to inquire for the doctor, and to relate the circumstances of his visit to the Hardys. Mr. Bladen listened calmly to the narrative, and then directed his little boy to step over to the doctor's office, and ask him to come in and take supper with "Brother Bradford." This message soon brought the doctor, for he was a recent and zealous convert. Harry was glad to find him ready to coöperate in his plans for the restoration of poor Jack Hardy, whom they remembered during the time of his brief attendance at the church.

Harry gained several items of information respecting the Hardys from his new friends at Union. Dr. Lewis had visited professionally in Mr. Kinton's family as well as among his slaves. He had often seen Hardy, and knew he was considered an excellent overseer. Mr. Kinton regretted his unsteady habits, for he said he could find no one else to suit him as well as he did when

he would attend to his business. Mr. and Mrs. Bladen both remembered seeing the young man and his wife at meetings during the time of the revival, when Mr. Stanley was with them. Mrs. Bladen had noticed that the wife was at times much affected by the sermons, and when mourners were invited to the altar for prayer. She spoke to her on the subject of her personal salvation, but could obtain little satisfaction; she was so very shy and unable to converse on account of weeping. The husband, Mr. Bladen said, was serious and acknowledged his need of religion, but could not be induced to take any more decided step. Mr. Stanley had spoken to them, but with no better effect. The mother they had not seen. Mrs. Bladen promised, as soon as her husband could spare a horse, to ride over and visit them.

All these circumstances deepened Harry's regret that he could not stay and watch over them himself, but he found Dr. Lewis ready to join in any efforts to benefit them, either temporally or spiritually. Harry insisted upon riding over with him after supper, but was finally persuaded by his friends to defer it to the next day, and first hear the doctor's report of the case after he had seen the patient.

Mr. Lanning and Mr. Temple had both told him not to expect much opportunity for study on his first round, but to make himself acquainted with the people, and afterwards he could regulate his time to suit himself. So he spent the evening sociably with the family. The news of his arrival soon spread, and several dropped in to see the new preacher. The children, as usual, clustered about him, and the time passed pleasantly, especially as the doctor on his return gave a favorable account of his patient, who was rational after the subsidence

of the fever, and said he hoped the new preacher would come and see him again. In the morning, Harry visited him with Dr. Lewis. They found the young man completely subdued by suffering, grateful for their kindness, ready to listen to faithful admonition, and melted to penitence by prayer.

Though Harry had during the last year of his college life been accustomed to take an active part in the interests of the church, to lead classes, and even to conduct prayer-meetings, still his innate modesty and diffidence of himself, now made it necessary for him to be reminded that he was the principal person on such occasions. This was far from being unpleasant to the older members of the society. After being repeatedly repulsed, and unceremoniously set aside by conceited young men, assuming quite as much authority in church affairs as belonged to them, they were refreshed and soothed by the affectionate respect and deference manifested by Harry. So far as the advantages of social position and intellectual culture were concerned, he was vastly the superior; but in religious experience he felt his youth, and was ever inclined to esteem others better than himself.

Class-meeting was, on some accounts, his greatest trial. He loved to stand and listen to the outpourings of deep religious experience, of joyful faith or tender penitence; but when he was expected to reply in a strain of counsel or admonition, gladly would he have taken his seat to be taught or exhorted by the youngest disciple present.

Possessing by nature a high order of mind, the first care of his parents had been to give it the aid of sound, vigorous physical organs to work with, and a simple, clear perception of the immeasurable distance between

truth and falsehood—right and wrong. With this starting point, the great advantages of society and education had all told upon the development of his character, like the repeated, minute touches of the artist's pencil, till the result was a combination of symmetry, strength and sweetness rarely found in one individual.

Thus endowed, he was now thrown among a people in many respects uncongenial. But they were Christians, and what so ennobling, so refining as pure religion? Here there was no uncongeniality; and if in his public ministrations or social intercourse a portion of himself still dwelt apart, there was much of human, and more of Christian brotherhood to brighten the path of life. When he pursued his way far up among the cottages of his mountain circuit, he found himself shut in with the absolutely unlettered poor; even then the yearning compassion and zealous activity of the missionary carried him forward, leaning upon the promise, "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

The part of the circuit Harry was now to traverse lay along the higher portions of the mountains, where the soil was scanty and the population consequently less able to procure the comforts and conveniences of life; occasionally varied by a descent into some little smiling valley, bringing the weary traveller to a substantial farmhouse, where the sweets of companionship repaid him for his previous toils and privation.

He frequently beguiled the solitude of his rides by fancying a resemblance between the changing, strongly contrasted scenes through which he passed and the chequered path of life. Sometimes along the bleak ridge of the mountain, rudely assaulted by the rough autumnal wind, or chilled by the frosty night air; then gladdened

by "the cheerful lights of home," in some sheltered nook where the expected guest found everything arranged for his comfort and awaiting his arrival. Sometimes lodged in a sumptuous mansion, feasted upon all that nature or art can furnish to pamper the craving desires of man, while a retinue of slaves stand around to catch the slightest glance that asks for service. Again, perhaps missing the unfamiliar road, weary and hungry, compelled to ask a shelter from the coming storm in some comfortless, dirty, wayside hut, where the sordid owners grudge even the food needful to recruit the jaded horse. Or, "haply in some cottage far apart," so feelingly described by the poet, to join in breathing the voice of praise and prayer into His ear, who will

> "Hear well pleased the language of the soul,
> And in his book of life the inmates poor enrol.'

Like him who treads the path of life, now in sunlight, now in gloom; now in luxury, now in privation; journeying in sweet fellowship with the children of the kingdom; warning the careless, pleading with the hardened, ministering to the sick, or pointing the eye of the departing to the ever cleansing blood of the Lamb: thus the humble circuit rider, if faithful to his high responsibilities, goes on his way. And thus Harry went on his chosen way; his experiences differing in no essential points from what has been related, till he again approached Brookton.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE DYING SAINT.

"Kneel down at the couch of departing faith,
And hear the last words the believer saith;
She has bidden adieu to her earthly friends,
There is peace in her eye that upward bends;
There is peace in her calm, confiding air;
For her last thoughts are God's—her last words prayer."

WARE.

By deviating a little from his direct route, Harry could visit Mrs. Arnold, if she were indeed still an inhabitant of earth. With some hesitation he drew near the house, but to his relief met a servant, and learned that she yet lived. He again found her sitting up, for she was unable to lie down from difficulty of breathing, more feeble and emaciated, if possible, than before, but "rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer."

She welcomed her young pastor with that singular brightness of expression, that *ethereal fire*, which so often gleams out through the physical exhaustion and pallor of the dying. What is it that so exultingly lives and speaks while all around is crumbling to decay? Is it not the redeemed spirit, looking forth from the tottering walls of its prison house, elate with the anticipated release? So it seemed to Harry, but he could scarcely realize that this was the chamber of suffering and sorrow, till the sad, anxious faces of the family reminded him that all were not so near the goal.

Though Mrs. Arnold could converse only by uttering a few words at a time, she manifested a lively interest in

the circuit. Fearing to fatigue her, Harry was inclined to be sparing in his communications, till her evident pleasure, and smiling "Go on," drew from him a minute account of the Hardys, and his interview with them. Before he left, she asked him to pray with her. He did so, and when about to rise from his knees, she laid a gently detaining hand upon his shoulder, while with gasping breath, but holy fervor, she prayed for him—for the young laborer just entered into the vineyard of the Lord. She alluded to the toils and sufferings which lay before him, as well as the snares and temptations which he must resist, steadfast to the end; and importunately did she ask for him that shield which alone can quench the fiery darts of the enemy, with a constant view of that starry crown which awaits the faithful—his bright recompense of reward.

Harry was completely subdued, and so unable to control his emotions, that he almost immediately took leave, saying that he would ride over and see her again the next day.

"I hope not, my dear brother," was the smiling reply.

Harry's surprise was but transient, for he had caught her meaning before she could gather breath to continue.

"I hope before that to be gone. This fluttering breath must soon cease. But your time is not yet; you have much to do first. Still you will come—If I am here—I shall be glad to—see you."

Something in her meek, affectionate manner, and the heavenly calm of her spirit, brought his mother so visibly before him, as she appeared the last few days of his stay at home, that he was fain to hurry on to the shelter of a thick wood, where he could enjoy the luxury of laying aside manhood and weeping like a boy. Flinging his bridle over the branch of a tree, and plunging into the closest

part of the grove, he sat down on a mossy rock. He knew he was to rest several days at Brookton, before he started for the other part of his circuit. The enthusiasm of activity began to subside. Home, with all its endearments, clustered about his heart. He felt the overshadowing gloom of coming hardships and privations—so feelingly touched upon in the prayer of his dying friend. Shall we blame or despise him for thus bowing his head in human weakness? Or shall we not rather, in silent sympathy, sit down beside him, remembering how often our hearts have yielded to despondency in the stern conflicts of the race?

> "Oh, there are moments when the cares of life
> Press on the weary spirit; when the heart
> Is fainting in the conflict, and the crown,
> The bright, the immortal crown, for which we strive,
> Shines dimly through the gathering mists of earth."

The burden now pressing upon Harry's heart, was his sense of inability to perform the duties he had assumed. Before he could regain his usual calm steadfastness, he had to lift up his heart, and ask, that if he had mistaken the voice of the Spirit, he might now be made aware of it.

Again, in the stillness of his listening heart, he was made to hear, "Go, preach my Gospel," and "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." "Fear not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God." Peace and strength were given with the words, and he sat some time communing with his own heart. Then, though humbled in the remembrance of his weakness; yet rejoicing in the renewal of his high commission, he rose, mounted his horse, and a brisk ride brought him into the village.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LETTERS FROM HOME.

"Soft! watch him now, the while he opes the packet;
'Tis from that far off land he calls his home,
And there is that within will touch him nearly."

KNOWING that Mr. Lanning would be absent, he did not stop till he reached the parsonage. The first to discover his approach was little Jemmie, whose shout of welcome reached his ear through the closed window, even before he noticed the bright little face peeping out through the curtains. In a moment the door was opened by Mr. Temple, and Jemmie came jumping, almost tumbling down the steps, crying out—

"Buver Badford—Buver Badford, et me ide. Papa ets me ide."

Mr. Temple caught him up in full career, saying, "No, no, you rogue, if papa is so foolish as to spoil you, that is no reason you should expect the same from others."

But Harry held out his arms for the little claimant, with a smile so full of love, that Mr. Temple tossed him up, saying as he pointed to the window, "I think you will not ride far."

Harry looked, and there stood Mrs. Temple with baby in her arms, holding up a package of letters. Harry's heart bounded at the sight, but he would not disappoint Jemmie, so bowing and smiling to Mrs. Temple, and dis-

regarding the remonstrance of Mr. Temple, he tucked the boy away in the folds of his large riding coat, and galloped off. A short ride satisfied the little fellow, and his father was ready at the gate to take him. As soon as Harry was on his feet, Jemmie was ordered by his father to wait upon his "Buver Badford" into the house, while he took the bridle of Harry's horse and turned towards the stable.

"Stop," said Harry, following, "what are you doing?"

Mr. Temple laughingly pushed him aside, saying, "Go into the house, and read your letters. You know nothing about our fashions up here. I am going to take care of your horse. When I come home and find you rested and warmed, I shall expect you to do the same for me."

"But I am neither tired nor cold," remonstrated Harry, as he caught the bridle, "I can attend to him as well as not."

"You will be both the next time you get back from the upper part of the circuit, so go in and read your letters."

Seeing that these kind intentions were not to be frustrated, Harry had to yield, and hastened to meet the warm, sisterly welcome of Mrs. Temple.

"Now," said she, "sit down. Here are your letters, and I hope they are full of pleasant news. I am going to be engaged about supper a little while."

Harry felt that he was indeed among friends, and thanking Mrs. Temple for her consideration of his comfort, as he disengaged himself of his wrappers, willingly seated himself before a bright fire to feast upon letters from home. Letters from home! Talismanic words!

What wanderer's heart does not glow at the idea? At any rate, Harry's did, and he was soon far away from Long Run circuit, in the midst of his beloved friends.

One from his mother—one from Willie—one from Mrs. Rodney—one from Mr. Stuart. Where should he begin? The hesitation was brief, and he was soon absorbed in the outpourings of a mother's love.—Not that there was so much expressed in words, as that it so vividly brought up her life-long devotion to his minutest want; her untiring labor of love, in training him for the holy vocation to which she had in infancy so unselfishly devoted his manhood. Now the time had come for the vow to be performed; and she was ready. He knew how much it cost her, and that was one great incentive to a life of usefulness, lest the price should have been paid in vain. Col. Hunter was not apparently improved in health or spirits. He often spoke of Harry, and at times seemed impatient at his absence. Then he would check himself, and say, "After all, Sophy, I suppose it is best for him. There was no need of him about here yet, and he ought to be doing something, as you say. He is a better farmer now, than half the landholders in the county. He is a noble boy, and if anybody can do any good in this poor world, I believe he will. But I miss him very much. Don't you, Sophy?" Mrs. Bradford heard occasionally from Susan, but Mrs. Allington seldom wrote. Her loss, with the entire change in her condition, wore upon her health as well as spirits. Then her son's marriage was not productive of happiness even to him, and the probability was, that Forestdale, with the poor servants, would pass into the hands of strangers. Susan was still doing all she could by her patient sweetness to cheer her desponding mother. Willie seemed to be quite

as well as he had been for years. His interest in the spiritual welfare of his poor slaves was undiminished, and what he could not accomplish, he found Mr. Stuart willing to undertake. They labored together in the bonds of true Christian brotherhood. Mr. and Mrs. Preston were kind and neighborly. The servants were generally orderly and dutiful, and all, when they had an opportunity, inquired about "Mars Harry," and sent their love to him.

Willie's letter dwelt principally on the subjects most dear to his heart. First, his earnest desire to see his father's sorrows alleviated by the bright hopes of Christianity; that he might be brought to view the disappointment of his worldly aspirations as only a needful chastisement, sent in love to wean his heart from earth and fix it on heaven. He fondly trusted that light was beginning to break in upon his long-cherished gloom—Next the servants—oh, how ardently he panted for the salvation of every one! He had attained one much desired object. The overseer who had for years served them as faithfully in a worldly point of view as any one could, had been compelled to leave, and his place was supplied by another of Willie's own choosing, who could and did coöperate with him in watching over the best interests of these helpless, often wayward beings.

Mr. Stuart gave him some interesting particulars of the state of his own parish, and also of his joint labors with Willie among his people. He spoke of Willie almost with reverence, for one so guileless, so pure, so heavenly-minded, he said he had never met before. He thought his health much improved, and saw no reason, except his singular meetness for another and higher sphere, to apprehend a speedy termination of his labors.

It was not surprising that Mr. Stuart should entertain this view, as their expeditions together were usually in the early part of the day, when Willie was comparatively fresh and animated. Then he was full of hope and courage. He seldom saw him after the day was over, when he returned listlessly to his old friend, the sofa, exhausted in body, and frequently with the depressing consciousness of his insufficiency for the great work he had undertaken.

Mrs. Rodney's letter was, as might be expected, a mingled tissue of affection and vexation. Like Martha of old, she was careful and troubled about many things of a worldly nature. In the midst of her sincere love for Willie, it was plain to be seen, without intention on her part, that her restless spirit could not yet be satisfied that he would live to be the heir of Hunter's Lodge. She alluded cautiously and distantly to her hope that when Harry's boyish freak, of making a barbarian of himself, should die out, restored to his better senses, he would then return to the bosom of his family. With some effort she abstained from another favorite topic till near the end of the sheet, when she mentioned her intention of leaving Mr. Stuart to keep "bachelor's hall" at Glen Cottage, while she went to spend most of the winter in Baltimore. At this point the temptation was too great to be resisted, and starting with the information that she should take Rose with her, she burst forth in warm eulogium of her surpassing beauty, and the marvellous effect on all within the scope of its magic spell—at which outbreak, it must be confessed, Harry was in the act of smiling when Mr. Temple returned from the stable.

"Oh, I see you have pleasant news, Bradford; I am

glad of that," taking a seat beside him. "How do they all do?"

Harry was vexed to feel the blush of boyish embarrassment deepen in his cheek, but the idea of the pleasant news made him laugh.

"Ah, well," said Mr. Temple, joining in the laugh, "if it is so pleasant as that, I am afraid I returned too soon. I presume our acquaintance—no, between Methodist preachers, our *friendship*—is not old enough for me to be the confidant of such tender affairs."

"Yes it is," returned Harry, still smiling; "I will make you my confidant now."

Mr. Temple suddenly assumed a most ludicrous attitude of attention. "Come on, my dear fellow. I am charmed at the prospect. My heart already begins to throb sentimentally."

"Then your heroics must prepare for an abrupt letting down, for I have nothing sentimental to communicate."

Mr. Temple, with a sudden change of expression that lost none of its drollery, signified his disappointment in missing such a treat; and Harry, after a thoughtful pause, resumed by touching lightly upon the peculiar family traits which made the heirship of so much importance to his grandfather and Mrs. Rodney; then most tenderly upon Willie—the uncertainty of his life, and the trying position in which it naturally placed him. He mentioned his Aunt Rodney's determination to have him married as soon as possible, and in such a way as to restore the somewhat endangered honors of the family, even pointing out the particular individual selected years ago to be the wife of the heir.

Mr. Temple's humor, during Harry's brief narration,

had changed from grave to gay, and from gay to grave, again and again. He now asked,

"What part does you mother perform in this unceremonious disposal of your heart and hand?"

"My mother never takes a prominent part in any discussion. Her influence is like the blessed dew of heaven. It distills silently, unobtrusively. Unnoticed by casual observers, but most healthful in its effects, softening, fertilizing and refreshing."

"Then she is a true woman, just like my wife. But has she done all that for you?"

Again Harry laughed, in spite of his more serious mood, at the sudden transition in this speech, from a grave earnestness, to a natural, irrepressible drollery.

"In my case," he answered, "she probably did not find the soil susceptible of much improvement; but to answer your more sensible question, she has, even from my childhood, often dwelt upon the blighting effects of hasty, unsanctified marriages; but now, having faithfully instructed, warned, and guarded me, she leaves me the responsibility of acting for myself. The result is, that between my aunt's impatience, and my own fears of making a misstep, I should prefer not to hear the subject mentioned. The very fact that my marriage is an affair of so much importance in the family, has thus far only made it distasteful to me."

"That is just as it should be; for, of course, if you join the conference, it is not to be thought of for four years. But I can tell you one thing for your comfort, my good brother, you are just the man to have all the snares spread for you. There is not a mother of single daughters on the circuit, that will not appropriate you before you get round once. And how do you think Miss

Rosalba will like it? How many broken hearts have you left now upon the mountains?"

Provoked as Harry was almost inclined to be at this jesting, he could not restrain a laugh as he replied, that it was not necessary for him to confess, as Mr. Temple would learn all about it himself.

"But, I believe," he continued, "another plan of my kind but injudicious aunt is to entangle me in that way, as the most effectual bar to my entrance into the conference, and thus be the means of turning my attention to the law."

"I do not see, my dear brother, but that you must become a very serpent for wisdom if you are to escape. But how is it on that point? Are you still safe, think you?"

A pause, imperceptible to his auditor, sent Harry's lightning thought to Gaywood and then to Staunton; but the firm and ready answer, "Yes, entirely safe," not only established his own consciousness of its truth, but carried conviction to the mind of his friend.

"That is well, and then we need not lose you, I trust, and as I shall probably be returned next year, I shall give the bishop a hint that you ought to be my colleague."

Harry met the sparkling glance, that sent these words home to his heart, with one as bright, expressing his cordial acquiescence in such an arrangement.

"And in the meantime," he asked, "can you tell me where my trunk is, and where I am to sojourn while I am in Brookton?"

"Yes, that is all settled. I forgot to tell you. I wish this house had another room, and we should keep you with us."

"Thank you, I should like that of all things; but as it cannot be, where am I to go?"

"Well, the brethren here no doubt saw that you were a mischievous fellow, and so they have placed you with old Sister Danby. She is a widow, and has only two grandchildren living with her, a boy and a girl. Her house is a very band-box for neatness, and you will have a quiet time, at any rate."

"That is all that is necessary, for of course, I shall be there but a few days at a time."

A summons to supper interposed, and the conversation turned upon circuit news—first impressions—prospects of extending the work, etc. Mr. Temple engaged to look after Hardy, and if possible to rouse up his dormant interest in religion. They agreed to go together, the next day, to visit Mrs. Arnold; and, after supper, Mr. Temple went with Harry to introduce him to his new hostess, to whose house his luggage had been already sent. The good old lady received him with maternal kindness, and as Mr. Temple soon took leave, he was early shown to his neat and comfortable room.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

REST WEEK.

"Toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing,
Onward in life he goes."

LONGFELLOW.

WHAT a boon to the weary circuit rider is a rest week, and a spot, however small, that he can consider his castle. Harry's home-nurtured heart was peculiarly sensitive to these comforts, but equally able to lay them aside, and bravely breast the storm when duty called. Wherever he had stopped in his rides, his friends had made so large a demand on his time as to leave him scarcely a moment to himself. He now threw himself into a luxurious, old-fashioned easy chair, with a most satisfactory feeling that this was his own nest. Here, after all his wanderings, he could return to his books, his more commodious writing apparatus, and sundry little conveniences furnished by the loving care of his friends at Hunter's Lodge, all necessarily excluded from the narrow limits of his saddle-bags. He now gave himself up to a long reverie of mother and friends; but home-sickness this time was not allowed to more than knock at the door. He stilled its restless yearnings by writing long letters in answer to those he had received. Afterwards, fervently commending the loved ones to the care of Him whose eye never slumbers nor sleeps, he betook himself to his pillow.

The visit to Mrs. Arnold was made at an early hour, but it was only to gaze upon the lifeless clay. Her own feelings had been a true indication of the coming release. The fluttering breath had indeed ceased. She passed away about midnight in full possession of her mental powers and a joyful expectation of heavenly rest.

When Harry again took the saddle for the other half of the circuit, the last golden days of October had given place to November's gloomy clouds and threatening rain. Before he reached his first appointment, it came down steadily, perseveringly; but the slight discomfort only made the genial warmth of Virginia hospitality more cheering.

The country lay for the most part in a widely extended valley. The farms were large, and, as well as the people, more on an equality than those he had previously visited. The greater part of his rides were now through continued rains, but he was everywhere received with the easy kindness of old friends.

Among the many and grievous evils of slavery, let it not be denied, that it is most conducive to a delightful hospitality. Not always because the undue amount of care and labor is shifted from the shoulders of the family to be laid with crushing weight upon the overtasked slave. Not so. On large plantations or farms there are always more household servants than sufficient for the daily routine of duty, and the surplus time must be filled up with the monotonous employments of knitting, sewing, or spinning; and no one hails with more delight the arrival of guests than these humble members of the community. If it chance to be a stranger, with grave deference they watch every movement, and heed every word, which are treasured up to furnish capital for dis-

cussion in the cabin, where condition, character, manners, dress, etc., are dissected and commented on with a precision not always exercised in the drawing-room. But if it is an old acquaintance, a friend of the family, one who knows how to reciprocate the affectionate manifestation—what an exuberance of spirits—what glittering of eyes and teeth—what strife in rendering the smallest service! With a crowd of these assistants, whose pride it is to know and perform with scrupulous exactness the duties of their position, it may be said that hospitality costs nothing—a truth that cannot be denied. Neither can it be denied that the guest, under these circumstances, is relieved from the harassing fear of burdening the kindness of his entertainers, or of imposing labor upon them which their already well filled time can barely endure, in consequence of which the social hour is marred by anxiety and curtailed by a worthy consideration for the comfort of the hosts.

Many of the wealthy landholders in this part of the State had been among the early friends of Col. Hunter and Mrs. Rodney. Busy rumor, with the hearty coöperation of Mr. Temple, had not only informed them of Harry's relationship, but as usual given him credit for all the advantages that were, or ever might be, centred in his person. It was not enough that they found him noble in person, and polished in mind and manners, but it was whispered at once that he was the immediate heir to his grandfather's large possessions. As to Willie, if his existence was not altogether ignored, he was pronounced the victim of some unheard of, incurable disease, and set aside without judge or jury.

As soon as Mrs. Rodney found that her nephew's destination was inevitable, and learned that the part of the

State where he was to minister was in the midst of some of her earliest friends, she wrote to them, especially to Mrs. Mason, whose mother had been a schoolmate and cherished friend, asking their friendship for Harry. He was in consequence called upon, and invited to their houses, where he was immediately appreciated. They even went to hear him preach whenever he was in their neighborhood, as long as he remained on the circuit. In the view of these worldly but kind-hearted persons, his zeal and evident devotion to his work were but an overflow of youthful enthusiasm, which at present was most charming, but which must be necessarily dropped as soon as he entered upon his estate.

His acquaintance and company were instantly sought, and every attention proffered to make his short stay agreeable, so that it required all his firmness of purpose and ardent attachment to his own people, to resist the allurements spread for him on every side. But he had given himself, not without counting the cost, to the missionary work upon which he had just entered, and there he found his highest enjoyment. With the natural easy courtesy of a gentleman, but in his own proper character, he met their polite advances as far as was consistent with his work, and no farther. Thus he journeyed on from appointment to appointment till all had been filled, and he again found rest in his pleasant retirement at Mrs. Danby's.

Mr. Temple was already at home, and brought the news of Hardy's recovery. He had not yet been out, but promised, as soon as he was able, to attend the preaching at Union. His wife and mother were evidently awakened on the subject of religion, and anxious to learn. They all spoke of Harry's visits and conversa-

tions with gratitude, and hoped that he would not pass them by when he came round again.

One day and part of another was all that he could spend at Brookton this time. The weather was clear when he left. The late rains and winds had robbed the scenery of its varied hues, and the leaves that had so lately flaunted in all the colors of the rainbow, lay in masses, brown and wet, under his horse's feet, while the north wind whistled a melancholy dirge through the naked branches, the very brightness of the sunshine seeming but a mockery of the desolation.

Harry found his friends rejoiced to welcome his return, and his congregations larger and more attentive than before. It seemed as if the people had opened their very hearts to receive him with his message, for while the latter was enjoyed with great spiritual relish by many, all seemed to strive for possession of him. He had more pressing invitations than he could possibly accept.

The Garners overwhelmed him with hospitality and invited all the élite of the neighborhood to be introduced to him. This elaborate showing off was not at all to his taste, but he determined to profit by the experience of his last visit, and keep in mind that their flatteries and superabundant politeness were merely to be ascribed to a peculiar style of living and speaking. Still it was uncomfortably different from the easy, unostentatious mode of entertaining at Hunter's Lodge, where guests, though in the midst of an intelligent society, with a fine library, pictures and other means of enjoyment at command, were allowed to feel perfect freedom, to mingle in the social circle, or to seek the retirement of their own rooms, as suited the passing mood. The constant effort and excitement that were kept up at Altamont wearied him, and it was

with a sense of relief, that he found himself again in the saddle pursuing the steep and rugged way towards the fork of the road where the voice of Mrs. Hardy had arrested his steps.

The house of these humble friends, with their simple kindness and warm fire, formed a seasonable resting-place before breasting the rushing blast on the mountain top. The young man was now pretty well, and joined with his mother and wife in expressing his thanks for the interest manifested in his welfare. Several of the brethren from Union had visited them from time to time, and Mr. Temple had spent more than an hour with them. The next day, Harry had scarcely taken his seat in the pulpit before he discovered Hardy in the congregation. He soon found his modest-looking wife also, and the sight of their earnest eyes, among the many fixed upon him, gave additional glow to the words of Gospel invitation that flowed from his lips.

As he affectionately urged those who felt their need of spiritual light to remain and join with them in class meeting, he glanced with some solicitude to their places. There they sat. The husband firm but deeply serious, the wife—the tender-hearted woman dissolved in tears, both apparently resolute to seek the salvation of their souls.

Now, the gay, the indifferent, have passed out, and as they enter their carriages, or mount their horses, they talk, they laugh, they criticise the appearance and manner of the young ambassador, and perhaps express their admiration of both, but do they know that they have an interest in the solemn words that he has so feelingly addressed to them? He, when the closing doors have shut out their voices, with swelling heart and glistening eye, gathers around him the little band who hunger for the

bread of life. Their glad voices mingle with his full tones as he sings:

"Behold us, Lord, assembled here,
Thy promises to claim;
To thee and to each other dear,
We meet in thy great name.

"We meet to tell of conflicts strong;
How much thy help we need;
To say how thou hast led us on,
And ask thee still to lead.

"We meet to lift our hearts to Him,
Who makes our cup run o'er
With joy, and while it bathes the brim,
We meet to ask for more.

"Thus sang the little band, thus ceased the lay.
With one consent before the throne they kneel,
Who does not see 'the new, the living way,'
As comes the welcome call, the solemn '*let us pray.*'

"He that hath bowed before the mercy seat,
His very soul engaged in fervent prayer,
Finds the Lamb's blood the only offering meet
By which he can obtain an earnest there.
How blest! oh, how supremely blest they are
Through the rent veil, who find an access given,
A consecrated way his love to share,
By which distrust and fear are far off driven,
And man, poor sinful man, communicates with heaven.

"The prayer now o'er, again the sacred song
Bursts forth spontaneous from their lips and hearts;
And then the solemn question follows on,
And each his failings, fears, and hopes imparts:
Tells how the shield of faith, the fiery darts
Hath oft repelled—how, bowed and nearly slain,
Yet trusting in his word, the tempter's arts
To foil and to deceive have been in vain;
And for the glorious prize, they're pressing on again.

"All cannot speak of conflicts thus maintained;
All cannot say that victory thus was won;
Alas! on some the tempter's power has gained,
And to the Spirit of grace despite been done.
Yet were they told, again the race to run,
Kindly exhorted still to watch and pray,
To look alone to God's eternal Son,
Whose precious blood their sins can wash away,
Nor let their wandering feet again from Jesus stray.

"Perchance some weeping mourner there may lie,
Beneath the hidings of God's glorious face;
And dark and dismal to the mental eye,
Is all the way—Oh words of Gospel grace!
How sweet you fall, such shadows to displace,
As the kind leader, like a shepherd leads
Their wandering feet, and teaches them to trace
His way who never breaks the bruised reeds,
But comforts those who mourn, those that are hungry feeds.

"I fear there still are those who would but smile,
These warm effusions of the heart to hear,
And turn away disdainfully, the while
They marked the falling of the contrite tear.
And let them smile, brothers and sisters dear;
Banded together, let us still remain;
Still on our pilgrimage each other cheer,
And only part that we may meet again,
Where love's triumphant ties are never rent in twain."

Long before it came to Hardy's turn to speak, his firmness gave way to the tide of conviction on account of his past neglect of eternal things, that bowed his heart in self abasement. With Christian sympathy Harry inquired into the cause of his distress. The language of the kingdom is soon learned, and the few expressions for which he could find utterance told plainly of the work

of the Spirit of Truth, and that he was at least an honest seeker of that Saviour whose invitations had been so long slighted. His wife could only weep and respond in monosyllables to his questions; but Harry was satisfied, for his conversation the previous day had revealed her humble hope that her sins were already pardoned.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE LIGHTED VALLEY.

"Whence that peace
So dove-like, settling o'er a soul that loved
Earth and its pleasures? Whence that angel smile
With which the allurements of a world so dear
Were counted and resigned? That eloquence
So fondly urging those whose hearts were full
Of sublunary happiness to seek
A better portion? Whence that voice of joy,
Which from the marble lip in life's last strife
Burst forth, to hail her everlasting home?"

MRS. SIGOURNEY.

NOTHING of particular interest occurred on the circuit for some time, except that Harry was more and more surprised to find himself of so much importance. His arrival was everywhere hailed as an event for which all were to prepare. The interest in religion was increasing. Several persons had sought and found the Saviour, ascribing their happy change to his instrumentality. Sometimes when he had come down from the pulpit with the sorrowful conviction that his words had fallen upon heavy ears and cold hearts, he was astonished to find that one or more had been touched by the Spirit, and led to see their danger without an interest in the blood of sprinkling. The Hardys continued to attend all the meetings at Union. Dr. Lewis, and others, watched over them with the affectionate zeal of true Methodists, till mother, son, and daughter were all brought to a

knowledge of the truth. Soon after, Harry was so happy as to be thrown in company with Mr. Hinton, with whom Hardy had served as overseer, and taking an opportunity to speak to him on his behalf, learned that Mr. Hinton had not yet found any one who could fill his place satisfactorily, and, on the strength of Harry's recommendation, expressed himself perfectly willing to try him again.

In some parts of the circuit, Harry was destined to prove the truth of Mr. Temple's prediction, which he had, at the time, heard and forgotten as a mere jest of his lively friend. In more than one instance he was embarrassed and mortified by the indelicate forwardness of mothers as well as daughters, in expressing their desire for his company, and their determination to secure his exclusive attention to themselves. Others, who should have known better, openly urged the propriety of his marrying some one or other of their favorites. Poor Harry! he began to think that a wife was the most annoying thing in the world, and was almost ready to take a vow of celibacy.

In one of his visits to the lower part of his circuit, he noticed in company with his aristocratic friends, the Masons, a pale, delicate girl that he had never seen before. She seemed to listen with more than ordinary interest to the sermon, scarcely taking her eyes from his face, only occasionally, in a pause, relieving her full heart by a long, deep-drawn breath. When the audience separated, some to return home, some to remain for class-meeting, he observed that she lingered, as if she wished to stay. But her gay friends were beckoning, and though tears trembled in her eyes, courtesy forbade her keeping the carriage waiting, so she turned reluctantly away, and the door closed upon her.

The next morning Harry left the neighborhood without even learning her name, but often in his solitary rides, those wistful eyes came up before him with an interest he could neither understand nor shake off. The next time he came round he received a hasty note from Mrs. Mason, requesting him to ride over to her house; that her niece, Miss Nugent, was extremely ill, and begged to see him at his earliest convenience. Again the wistful eyes and pale cheeks of the fair young stranger were before him, and he could not avoid the impression that she was the cause of this summons. Without waiting to partake of the offered refreshment, he hastened to the place.

As he drew near to the house, it seemed as if a cloud had overshadowed it. No gay carriage, with prancing horses, waited to bear the joyous inmates to the festive scene; no lively, laughing voices rang through the hall as he ascended the steps. A servant, with subdued voice and soft tread, conducted him to the drawing-room, where the flickering light of the fire scarce made up for the absence of daylight, excluded by the closed shutters and drooping curtains.

Harry stood before the fire, the profound stillness of the house making its slightest crackling almost painfully audible. He stood on the very spot where he had lately been gaily rallied upon his gloomy choice of a profession, and indirectly flattered by the insinuation that the Bar was a much finer field for talent and eloquence. Here he was again, sent for in haste, to visit, by virtue of that very profession, perhaps the dying bed of one dear to them. How startling are the transitions of human destiny!

A few moments, and Mrs. Mason came towards him, pale and agitated.

"Oh! Mr. Bradford, I am so glad you are come. Our

dear Clara is very ill; but I forget, you do not know her. Sit down, and I will try to tell you."

Instead of following the broken and brief narrative of Mrs. Mason, the facts, as they were stated by her, and by information afterwards obtained by Harry in other ways, are given in a more connected form.

Clara Nugent was the niece of Mr. Mason. Her parents resided in Richmond, and as she was an only daughter, had showered upon her every indulgence that wealth could procure, or unbounded affection devise. The result was what might be expected; she grew up a complete devotee to pleasure. Parties, balls, concerts, and amusements of every kind, were taxed "to lash the lingering moments into speed." But the race, though swift and brilliant, was short. A cold, taken in some midnight exposure, and neglected, had increased from time to time, till pleasure itself began to pall upon her languid spirit.

In great alarm, her parents hastened with her from the Hot Springs of her native Virginia to Saratoga, from Saratoga to the seashore, but with little real improvement. The belief that she must die had taken possession of her distracted imagination. At first she wept incessantly, but gradually a quietness succeeded, more from exhaustion than any abatement of her distress. The knowledge of salvation, through repentance and faith, had formed no part of her elaborate, fashionable education. Books that might have enlightened her path, were carefully removed out of her reach, lest they should increase her dejection. Repent she indeed did, but too often, in her blindness, she knew not what was sin, and tortured herself with terrors, because she knew not where to obtain light.

This state of mind was unendurable to her parents, and after forcing her into scenes of excitement and gaiety without effecting any improvement in either mind or body, as a last resort, they determined to send her on a visit to her pleasure-loving aunt, with whom she had hitherto spent her time in a round of frivolities that left no space for serious thought. Her mother was to have accompanied her, but a sudden attack of illness confined Mr. Nugent to his bed, and rendered it impossible for her to leave him. Promising to follow as soon as possible, with many injunctions to be happy, they consigned her to the care of a friend for the journey.

Letters were dispatched in advance, touching upon her peculiar condition, and urging that every means should be employed to remove the gloomy fancies which they believed were now the only obstacle to her restoration.

Accordingly, her uncle and aunt used every effort to raise her spirits, to induce her to cast aside her dark forebodings, and to enter with them the brilliant society by which they were surrounded. Sometimes their importunities prevailed, and with passive sweetness she suffered them to take her where they pleased; but much oftener, her pleading tears proved irresistible, and she secluded herself to nourish morbid and erroneous views of the hopelessness of her condition. The illness of her father continued, so that although no danger was apprehended, it was impossible for her mother to be with her. Thus poor Clara was left to mourn in secret, having none to point her bewildered steps to the city of refuge.

The day that Harry had seen her among his hearers, she had so pathetically entreated to be taken to church, that her uncle insisted she should be indulged. The sermon had deeply interested her, and poured much light

into her soul; but her mind, weakened by the habit of brooding over its own sorrows, had lost the power of arranging ideas so new. At times she would seem to realize the blessings of pardon, but again the remembrance of her sins would plunge her in despair.

Thus at times tossed with tempest and not comforted, at times catching a gleam of hope from the assurances of the sermon she had heard, then falling back upon herself, she would exclaim: "Oh, yes, there is hope for others, but not for me!"

In consequence of these violent alternations of feeling, together with an additional cold, the worst symptoms of her disease returned, and she sank at once under the double weight. The best medical aid was procured, but without any encouragement of recovery. She frequently referred to expressions used by Harry in his sermon and prayers, and the first line of one of the hymns was often on her trembling lips:

"Father, I stretch my hands to thee;"

but she tried in vain to recall anything more. No one could assist her, and then she would express a great desire to see him. This desire was the immediate cause of the note that brought him to the house.

Harry gathered enough of these particulars from Mrs. Mason's hurried and disconnected account to awaken his warmest sympathy in the sufferings of the dying girl; but he shrunk, with a sense of almost painful self-distrust, from entering upon an office so solemn. His youth and inexperience were in his view almost insuperable obstacles to his assuming the responsibility. He inquired if there were no older clergyman who would be more ac-

ceptable to Miss Nugent in a crisis so momentous. Mrs. Mason said that they had already sent for Mr. Clifford, but that he was absent from home, and assured him that Clara expressed the greatest anxiety to see *him*. He could say no more, but with a beating heart, and prayerful spirit, followed to the room.

Mrs. Mason motioned him to a seat, while she approached the bed. Miss Nugent was lying quite still—seemingly asleep; but at the touch of her aunt's hand she opened her eyes, saying in a melancholy tone:

"Oh, Aunt Mason, can you not give me any comfort?"

But that lady was ignorant of the source whence such comfort as her niece required was to be obtained. She could only answer, with a tender caress:

"Dearest Clara, you know there is nothing that I would not gladly do if I only knew what."

"Aunt Mason, did not Mr. Bradford say that Christ came to save sinners?"

"I dare say he did, my dear girl. Would you like to ask him yourself? He is here."

"Oh, yes. Where is he? May I see him?"

Harry obeyed the sign to approach; and as soon as her eager eyes rested upon him, she clasped her hands, exclaiming:

"Oh, Mr. Bradford, I am so glad. You will help me, won't you?"

"I will, Miss Nugent, in any way that I possibly can."

"Then you will tell me if there is any hope for my poor soul. You said Christ died to save sinners. Will he save me?"

"Do you consider yourself a sinner?"

"She covered her face with her hands, while she sobbed forth in broken accents:

"Oh, yes, too great a sinner, I am afraid, to ask for mercy."

"Do not say so, Miss Nugent. None need fear to ask for mercy, even the chief of sinners is invited to come and take of the water of life freely."

He then, as the surest mode of soothing her agitation as well as enlightening her mind, repeated some of the most plain and loving promises. By a few questions, he discovered her almost total ignorance of Scripture, and that in her darkness, she was vainly going about to establish her own righteousness, and despairing of its accomplishment, because she knew her time must be short. In the intense interest of the case, Harry forgot his embarrassment. In a brief but lucid manner he gave her an outline of the fall of man, and its consequences; touched on some of the leading prophecies of a coming Saviour, and then brought the whole plan of redemption before her mind so simply, so clearly, that at first it seemed to overpower her weakened faculties, and she lay in silent bewilderment. Then suddenly looking in his face, she said, almost with vehemence:

"Mr. Bradford, you would not deceive me! Is it true. Oh, tell me, is that all true?"

"It is the immutable word of God, Miss Nugent. The greater part of what you have heard is the language of the Bible. I would not deceive you for worlds, and you know God could not. He is truth itself."

Again she shut her eyes, and lay motionless, the solemn stillness only broken by the suppressed weeping of Mrs. Mason.

It was not long before Miss Nugent, with strange energy, raised her clasped hands, and with a beaming smile uttered in a soft voice:

"Blessed Saviour! I thank thee. Thou hast indeed revealed it unto a babe."

Then putting her hand into that of her youthful teacher, she added, "Oh, Mr. Bradford, how you have comforted me! I was blind, but you have been permitted to open my eyes. Now I am not afraid to die. I am willing to go to my Saviour, who died for sinners, even for me."

Mrs. Mason forgot to weep as she gazed, awestruck, on the changed aspect of her niece, but Harry's tears of humble gratitude flowed freely, while the happy new-born soul continued to exult in its emancipation from the thralldom of sin. Even when her tongue no longer uttered strains of love and praise, a holy triumph sat enthroned upon her parted lips, and glowed in her upturned eyes.

Then low but fervent tones of thanksgiving and prayer ascended for the one so soon to be—

> ——"Like the stars by day,
> Withdrawn from mortal eye,
> But not extinct, to hold her way
> In glory through the sky."

Earnest petitions followed for those who must still tread the shores of time, battling with trials and temptations; that all might come off more than conquerors, through him that hath loved us and given himself for us.

Poor Mrs. Mason had never heard herself so unmistakably prayed for as she now did. Under other circumstances, and from almost any other person, it would have been an offence to her proud spirit. But proud indeed must be that spirit that does not soften in the presence of the dying. The language and manner too, though bold, were so refined by Christian love, that the unguarded heart was penetrated and melted to tenderness before it had time to rebel.

When Harry rose from his knees, Miss Nugent seemed scarcely conscious of external objects, so filled was her whole being with a higher presence.

Promising Mrs. Mason to see them again, Harry took leave and hastened to his temporary home, longing to commune with his own heart; to analyze this happy excitement of feeling, lest there might be some mingling of self-complacency. Early taught to distrust the inmost stirrings of his human, and therefore deceitful heart, he called himself to the bar of self-examination. This time he could only find a participation of the joy that angels feel over one sinner that repenteth. If the idea for a moment intruded, that he had been the instrument of leading this erring one to the true light, it speedily disappeared before the magnitude of the Spirit's work; and with bowed heart, he could only breathe out, "What am I that I should claim this great honor? Not unto me, but to Thy name, be all the glory."

Mr. and Mrs. Nugent arrived the next day. At first, their frantic grief could not be restrained within the bounds of moderation, even in the presence of their dying child. But it was not long before the sweet peace, the ineffable joy that lighted up her pallid features, acted with the power of a spell in hushing those wild emotions of sorrow, and before Harry made his visit in the afternoon, they had subsided at least into quietness. He found the object of their solicitude, calmly but joyfully waiting for her summons, which it was evident could not be long delayed. Her powers of voice had been already taxed to the utmost, in exhorting her beloved friends to flee for refuge to the Saviour of sinners; but she welcomed him with a smile, and in a faint voice thanked

him again and again for coming to her, and for the blessed words of instruction he had given her.

As he rose to leave, she took his hand in both hers, and said impressively:

"Farewell, Mr. Bradford—I can never express what you have been to me. I am going home first, but it will not be long till we meet before the throne. Farewell till then."

Harry's heart was almost too full for utterance. He pressed the cold fingers, spoke a few words, and turned away. He saw her no more on earth; but in imagination her form ever moved amidst the white-robed, palm-bearing throng that follow the Lamb, singing, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us in his own blood, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

LOST IN THE SNOW

"Heavy and thick the atmosphere,
The prospect narrow, dark, severe—
Yet a few steps the path is clear,
For those few steps, march on

"The day goes out—the fog upcrowds,
Darkness, the face of heaven enshrouds,
A voice shall guide you through the clouds,
So patiently march on!

"If Duty set you on the way,
You need not fear—you must not stay;
Still faithfully her word obey,
Still loyally march on!"

The first part of the winter had proved unusually mild, and Harry was beginning to think that Mr. Preston had conceived an exaggerated idea of the hardships of the circuit, but early in February the weather became excessively cold at times, and as soon as it moderated snow fell till the roads in some places were almost impassable. Then he began to realize the truth of his friend's prediction, that his rides would be no fancy business. Still his health continued unbroken, and his spirits equal, sustained by the cordial of frequent letters from home. Sometimes the snow in the mountain roads was so deep, that he found it great labor to make his way through the drifts. Sometimes the storm came rushing through the gorges of the mountains with such tremendous power that a horse less strong, or a rider less firm in his seat, might have been swept off and hurled to the bottom of the abyss. The cold, too, was sometimes intense. But

a kind providence watched over him, preserving life and limb to the end.

He had become much attached to an excellent family by the name of Neale, who had shown him so much warmhearted kindness, that he looked forward to reaching their house as to a season of rest. Their family consisted of three daughters, and one son about seventeen years old. This son was the youngest, and the darling of the household, but a source of continual anxiety, for he was yet out of the fold. All were bound in one Christian band save this one. He had lately exhibited traits of character that could not but pain his affectionate relatives. He no longer sought his pleasures at home, but would often be absent for days together, they knew not where, nor on what occasion. If urged by his parents or sisters to stay with them, he became irritable and would make his absence even longer than before.

When Harry first came among them, Arthur was suffering from an injury in one of his feet, so that he was compelled to stay at home, and seemed to take much pleasure in his conversation. The whole family rejoiced in the change, hailing it as an omen of better times. But with that want of judgment which too often defeats the best intentions, they allowed him to perceive their efforts to throw him under the salutary influence of Harry's society. His suspicion of a trap to insnare him, as he would have expressed it, was instantly on the alert, and as soon as his lameness would permit, he withdrew from the domestic circle, though he always declared that "Mr. Bradford was the finest fellow of all the black-coats he knew, and a capital preacher besides."

Harry had become much interested for him, not only on his family's account, but because of his really fine

qualities, and his danger of being led astray. On his way to make his last visit to that part of the circuit, before he left for home, his mind dwelt much upon this family and the numberless acts of kindness he had received under their roof. He thought of poor Arthur, and the uncertainty that hung over his future. While he thought, many a prayer went up, that the poor boy might be brought into the fold of Christ.

As he was about to set off on his way to the hospitable abode of the Neales, the clouds that had been threatning snow all the morning, began to send down their feathery burden. The family with whom he had passed the night, used so many arguments to induce him to give up the attempt to brave the storm, that he consented to wait till after dinner. But he could not feel satisfied, his mind dwelt upon his waiting people, and especially poor Arthur. He knew that if he did not go now he should not see them again. So after dinner he carefully inspected the clouds, and as they appeared to be breaking, and the snow had ceased, he laughed at the fears of his friends, knowing that in their affection they would rejoice in any obstacle to his departure. He determined to go, and if the storm should come on with violence, there was a house, though not a very desirable one, where he could stay till morning. Mounting his faithful horse that had carried him through worse drifts than any he could now see, and bidding his kind hosts farewell, he pursued his way towards Mr. Neale's. He got on quite as well as he expected till he reached the house where he could stop. Here he hesitated in doubt whether to go on; as it did not yet snow, however, he decided to proceed. But he had not gone far when the snow began to come down, and the wind increased, so

that he made slow progress for a few miles. Again he stopped and turning his back to the blinding storm, deliberated whether he had better return and seek the uninviting shelter he had passed. If the snow should continue all night, in all probability he would be unable to leave the place for days. And then poor Arthur! must he lose the last hope of seeing him, and perhaps winning him back from the paths of sin and folly. This was not to be thought of, and again with fresh courage he dashed forward. With all his energy and determination, however, he frequently found it necessary to walk his horse.

While he was yet far from his journey's end, twilight began to spread her sombre mantle over the scene sooner than he expected, for what with the violence of the wind and his voluminous wrappings it was impossible to consult his watch. The light steadily diminished and he was still several miles from Mr. Neale's. As often as the thought of turning back had arisen, an impulse that he seemed constrained to obey, urged him forward, and now it would be as far to return as to proceed. Trusting to the sagacity of his stout horse, Pilot, to keep the direct road, even when the darkness should render it impossible for him to recognize familiar objects, he toiled on. The increasing depth of the snow convinced him that it must have been snowing much longer where he then was than at his starting-point. The present fall with what was already on the ground, was rapidly obliterating all traces of the road, and in some places even the fences were covered. At last, Pilot came to a dead stand. It was too dark to form an idea whether he stopped because he had reached the well-known resting-place, or because he was absolutely unable to proceed. Looking about and endeavoring to penetrate the gloom,

Harry could only discern enough of objects to lead to the conclusion that he was in a place where he had never been before. Then his courage began to falter. Had he been presumptuous in thus risking life? He thought of his mother, of the grief that would crush her very existence, should the tidings ever reach her that he had perished in a wintry storm. His heart went up in humble supplication that if he had sinned in thus rushing into danger, it might be forgiven, and his life preserved for the sake of those to whom it was so dear.

Choosing rather to trust to the more available instincts of his horse than to his own bewildered senses, he forbore to urge him forward. Pilot seemed to be considering the posture of affairs, for he looked first on one side, then on the other, drew a few long and strong breaths, then vigorously shaking the snow from his head and mane, he uttered a very intelligible snort of encouragement, and plunging through a heavy drift, started off at as brisk a pace as the nature of the case would admit. Harry caught the spirit, and cheered him on with his voice. They had not proceeded far when a light, a short distance before them, sent its rays of comfort to the heart of the chilled and weary traveller. A few more plunges brought them near enough to ascertain that it was a lantern fixed upon Mr. Neale's gate-post, by the anxious kindness of his friends, who had been talking and thinking of him, and wondering whether he could possibly reach them in the storm.

As he came near the house, four or five of the servants, who had evidently been on the watch, burst out of their own part of the establishment and setting up a joyful shout of welcome, almost lifted him from the sad-

dle. A most seasonable assistance it was, for his benumbed limbs could scarcely perform their office alone. Then one of the kind-hearted creatures took the exhausted horse to a good, warm stable and well filled crib, while Harry, leaning on the shoulders of two others, proceeded to the house.

"Oh, Mars Bradford, sir, you is almost froze, you oughtn't to try to come in such dreadful weather, sir; s'pose you had got snowed up out there in the cold and dark."

"Well, Abram, my friend, it was something of a risk, I am afraid; but a kind Providence has brought me safe to a shelter, and you know this is my last visit."

"Oh, no, Mars Bradford, can't 'low dat, sir. De conference will be sure to send you back to us. We don't want no other preacher next year, no how. Our folks all say so, and everybody else."

By this time, the sound of voices had reached the ears of the family and they came forth in a body to receive him. Harry's eye sought for Arthur, but he was not there. The tender-hearted mother shed tears of joy over this son of their affection. The father, after several attempts to chide him for venturing to come in such a wild night, invariably ended by grasping his hand and making a regular break-down, telling how glad he was to have him with them once more. The daughters soon separated on different errands connected with his comfort.

The usual meal-time was long past, but as anxiety on Harry's account had rendered it little more than a form, all were now ready to join in partaking of that prepared for him. The sufferings occasioned by his ride were but temporary, and readily yielded to the kind attentions

showered upon him. As soon as he had in some measure answered the inquiries respecting himself and his experiences on the way, he asked for Arthur, and was told that he had not been at home for several days. Nothing more was said at this time, for knowing how much he must require rest, Mrs. Neale hurried him off to bed, saying that she could not let him talk any more to-night, but in the morning, if he was well, she would tell him all about it.

Harry was by no means reluctant to obey this order; for his long exposure to fatigue, cold and anxiety, with the reaction brought on by the warm fire, and perfect relief to mind and body, had overwhelmed him with drowsiness. A long, refreshing sleep entirely restored him, and he joined the family in the morning, free from any memento of his dangerous ride, save a heart full of love and gratitude to the gracious Being who had so signally interposed in his behalf.

The morning rose clear, cold and sparkling. The snow was deep; but as the road to the little chapel was sheltered from the wind, there was little obstruction from drifts, and it was decided that with the aid of daylight, they might go without much difficulty. Before the time, however, Mrs. Neale found an opportunity to pour the sad tale of her maternal sorrows into the sympathizing bosom of her young pastor. There were several lads in the neighborhood, sons of Harry's best friends, possessed of every advantage to make them ornaments to society, talents, wealth and station, but who seemed determined to use their gifts only as means of helping each other on to ruin. All had seemed to think that if anything could avail to win them back to paths of rectitude, it would be the example and influence of such a person as Harry; so

like them in most respects, so unlike in the one point of greatest importance. At first, some of the leading spirits among them did seem to pause in their career. In spite of themselves they were captivated by the eloquence of the new preacher, and the charms of his conversation and manner in the social circle. But the chain of evil habit was too strong; and now that Harry was perhaps to be withdrawn from them entirely, the last hope faded from the hearts of their distressed friends.

Harry partook of all these hopes and fears, trying on all occasions to gain their confidence and friendship. So far as respect and admiration went, he succeeded, for there was not one among them that would not have defended him to any extent, if he had required it. Under these circumstances it was not surprising that he should select, for his last message in this place, a subject peculiarly adapted to the young; and he now endeavored to bear up the sinking hopes of his friends, by reminding them of the many cases where such wanderers had been brought home in answer to faithful, persevering prayer. They knew it all; but it strengthened them to hear it from one who loved Arthur, and who had so often prayed for him around their own family altar. With hearts somewhat less heavy they together proceeded to the place of worship.

Pilot was not allowed to leave the stable after his faithful services in bringing his master out of the snow drifts. Another was provided for Harry. A wagon body on runners was nicely arranged with clean straw in the bottom, covered with a carpet and cushions to sit upon. In this homely vehicle, Mrs. Neale and her daughters bestowed themselves. Thus they were conveyed more comfortably and safely than they could have

been in the sleigh, besides enjoying the benevolent pleasure of taking with them a whole family of friends who had no conveyance.

All were not as certain of Harry's being returned to them as Abram had declared himself; and by means of strong horses and such motley vehicles as could be pressed into the service, the congregation was as large as usual. Arthur occupied a prominent place in Harry's thoughts, and he imagined—he was almost sure—that he caught a glimpse of him and one of his associates slipping in and taking a seat in a corner, where they were partially screened from view.

Whether he was really more eloquent, more solemnly touching in his appeals, matters not. His hearers generally thought so. Was not this the last time that they might ever see or hear this beloved brother, who had come among them so unexpectedly, making up, and more than making up their loss in the absence of his feeble predecessor? Had he not by his unflinching integrity, his transparent truth, his unvarying deference for the old, his affectionate sympathy for the young, gained their entire confidence and warmest love? The answer was found in the breathless attention, the tears, the mingled affection and grief with which they drank in these, his last words to them.

But by what spell was it that one scarcely past his boyhood, a mere probationer for the sacred office, was thus received by grey-haired men, who had listened for years to the Gospel from mature and learned lips, and by the young, flushed with life, and all its allurements, whose hearts were filled with plans of worldly pleasure or aggrandizement? Oh, mothers! Christian mothers! answer this question by training up your sons in the way

they should go, with an eye single to the glory of God.

Then will the truth be emblazoned through all time, that God is a faithful God, who will not suffer one of his promises to fail. He will make your sons polished shafts in his temple—a praise in all the earth.

In the general press towards the altar to take leave, Harry could not determine whether or not he had really seen Arthur in the congregation. If he was there he did not join the family on their way home. Neither did Harry mention his conjecture, fearing it might excite hopes only to end in disappointment.

Harry and many others went to dine with a brother who lived near the church. Others came in after dinner and the hours passed off in the most delightful Christian communion. An informal prayer-meeting closed the interview, and they parted with the confident assurance, on the part of many, that if there was any virtue in *petition*, they would have their young preacher back again the next year.

Harry's heart was knit to these, his first flock, and he would willingly return to them; but he answered with a smile, that he did not feel quite sure that petitioning was right. That the promise, "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding," was a better dependence. And so they parted.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN.

"Jesus seeing *their* faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."—MATT. ix. 2.

AFTER the day was over, Harry, on returning to Mr. Neale's, found himself more exhausted than he would have been, had he not endured so much the previous night. He went early to bed, and had slept some hours when he was awakened by a sound as if some one touched the fastening of his door. He listened for a few moments, but hearing nothing, dropped asleep. Again he was aroused by a slight noise apparently in the room, and opening his eyes, he saw by the fitful gleam of the wood fire, the form of some one sitting on a low seat before it. Uncertain whether he was quite awake, he looked more intently. The light was imperfect but sufficient to convince him that he was not mistaken.

Supposing it might be one of the servants, he lay still, determined to watch his further proceedings. He could hear heavy, long-drawn sighs, and if his excited imagination did not mislead him, low whispered words as the face, buried in the hands, was bent to the knees. The person, whoever it was, was so evidently in distress that he could wait no longer, but asked, "Who is there?"

At the sound of his voice the figure started, sprang up, hesitated a moment, and then approached the bed, revealing to his almost incredulous eyes the outline and

motions of Arthur. Harry held out his hand, exclaiming:

"Why, my dear Arthur! What is the matter?"

But Arthur could not speak. He sat down on the side of the bed, and wept in silence. Harry threw his arm round him, with almost as much tenderness as if it had been Willie. Still Arthur could say nothing but, "Oh, Mr. Bradford!"

Harry waited till his agitation was in some manner calmed, and then resumed his inquiries.

"Has anything happened in the family? Is any one sick?"

"No. No one is sick that I know of. They do not know I am here—only Kriss, who let me in. But oh, Mr. Bradford I am sick. What is to become of me?"

Harry sprang out of bed, and began dressing in haste as he said, "Are you, my dear fellow? Then get into my bed and I will speak to your mother immediately."

But Arthur caught hold of him, crying out in a smothered voice, "No, no, you must not go, only let me stay with you. I want to talk with you. I am not sick—only I believe my soul is sick."

This idea had flashed through Harry's mind more than once, but he dared scarcely receive it till assured by these welcome words of its truth. Again he embraced the trembling boy, saying:

"Bless the Lord, if it is indeed true that you realize it. Dear Arthur, you are the child of many prayers. You must open your heart to me as freely as to a brother. But you tremble; you are cold. I will make up the fire, and then you must tell me all about it."

Arthur said he was not cold, but assisted in making the fire; after which they sat down together, and Harry

gathered from him the particulars of this new and promising state of feeling. He owned that the sermons he had lately heard had taken hold of his memory and heart more than usual. Some expressions used by Harry had haunted him. He tried to forget them, but they kept coming up to him, and he resolved again and again, that he would hear no more.

"But how long is it, Arthur, since you have felt unhappy on account of your sins?"

"I don't know—always, I believe. Not all the time, for I tried to drive it away, and sometimes I did for a long time, but it kept coming back when anything happened to make me think. If I was sick, I was always afraid of dying, and when my brother died, for a long time I was afraid to stay alone. It seemed as if God would send him to call me to judgment. But I got over that as I grew older, and then I did not feel or care for a long time. Then father and mother would talk to me, and make me angry, and I would say things that I knew were wicked. But when I got among the boys they would be cutting up and make me laugh. Then I felt better. The more I staid with them, the less I thought about my bad behavior."

"Dear Arthur, I hope now that the Spirit has visited you again you will not drive it away."

"That is the reason I came to you. I thought if you went away, I should never have a chance again, and I could not bear to speak to anybody else. I got as far as the door once, but as soon as I put my hand on the lock it seemed as if something held me back, and told me that it was of no use, for the boys would laugh at me, and I should be ashamed to own how bad I felt. So I was afraid to come in, and went back. Then it seemed

as if I almost heard somebody laugh—Oh! so dreadfully, and say, 'I told you so, I knew you would be afraid to go.'"

"And what did you do, then, my dear boy?"

"Oh! I felt awfully for a little while, and thought it was of no use to try. But I thought I would pray once more, and see if God would help me, for I was so miserable. After that, I hardly know how it was, but I found myself at your door again. I did not mean to wake you, because I knew you were tired; only I felt better when I was near you—more determined not to turn back."

"You did right, Arthur, and I am glad I waked up. It seems now as if it was for your sake that I was, as it were, compelled to come through the storm. I thought of you very often when I did not know whether to come on or to turn back. I am so glad you came to me in your distress. But you must not rest here; you now feel the burden of sin, which will be the greatest of blessings if it only drives you to the Saviour for pardon."

"Mr. Bradford, do you think he will pardon me? I have hardened my heart so long."

"Does he not say, 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest?'"

"Yes, but how can I come to him?"

"By repenting of your sins, and casting yourself on his mercy."

"Will you pray for me, Mr. Bradford?"

"What would you wish to have me pray for, my dear Arthur?"

"Oh! am so afraid I shall be led away, and forget it all, as I have so often done before."

"But you never before spoke so freely on the subject to any one, did you?"

"No, never. I never was fully determined to seek religion before."

"Now you think you are?"

"Oh, yes, I would not go back for the world. I have had a dreadful time of it, halting between two opinions.

"On what ground do you hope for pardon?—because you intend to be a better boy?"

"Oh, no, Mr. Bradford, I have been too well instructed not to know that there is no hope for me, except through the death of Christ. I can never do anything to deserve mercy, but I have done so much to offend him, I am afraid he can never forgive me."

"Then you wish me to pray that you, a poor helpless sinner, having no merit of your own, may be forgiven for the sake of the Saviour, who gave his life for the souls of sinners?"

"Oh, yes. That is all I desire: only that he will teach me to serve and obey him as long as I live."

They kneeled together, and Arthur wept while Harry prayed. When they rose, the poor boy's distress was greater than ever. His past sins seemed to stand in dark array before him, barring him from the mercy-seat, and hiding his Saviour from his eyes.

Harry tried in vain to induce him to look away from himself, to the sure word of God, and repeated text after text to him. He could only weep and groan in anguish of spirit. Long they sat clasped in each other's arms, mingling their prayers and tears. Arthur writing bitter things against himself, and wounding his own heart by an unskillful use of the sword of the Spirit, and Harry pouring in the oil and wine of God's promises to the penitent soul.

At length there came a period of silence. Arthur sat

in deep thought. It did not last long. He raised his head and fixed his eyes on the face of his friend. Then, with streaming tears, he broke out in joyful accents:

"Oh! I see it all now. Oh! the love of God in Christ! Why did I not see it sooner? It is so simple!"

And, falling on his knees, he poured forth a strain of thanksgiving and praise, in a tone so earnest, so loud, that he was heard by his father and mother. They came in great haste, followed very soon by his sisters, to learn the cause. Alarm gave place to a joy almost too great for them to bear when Arthur threw himself into their arms, proclaiming in broken sentences his new-born joys. The family were assembled, and, as it was now daybreak, they separated no more, but passed the time till breakfast rejoicing together. Only one idea occurred to mar the sweetness of their cup. That was the necessity for Harry's immediate departure, perhaps never to return. All regarded him as the instrument of this wonderful change in their dear Arthur, and knew not how to bear the parting.

Arthur clung to him, entreating him to stay, if but one day longer, and could only be pacified by his parents' consent that he should go with him to his next appointment. This arrangement gave equal satisfaction to Harry, as it furnished him with opportunities to become better acquainted with his young convert. Thus far he had been delighted with the change in his demeanor. From being full of *mannish* airs, selfish, irritable, and rebellious, he now appeared what is but too rare in these days, a simple, affectionate, *manly* boy. When parting-time really came, he could hardly be consoled by Harry's assurance that wherever he was sent, if they both lived, he would find some way of meeting again.

CHAPTER XL.

PROFESSION *vs.* PRACTICE.

"How do thy mercies close me round!
Forever be thy name adored;
I blush in all things to abound,
The servant is above his Lord!

"Inured to poverty and pain,
A suffering life my master led;
The son of God—the son of man,
He had not where to lay his head."

THE clouds again began to threaten a storm, when Harry parted from his young friend, Arthur, and set his face towards the more bleak and comfortless part of the circuit. In fact, a combination of circumstances soon taught him that Mr. Preston's opinion of the hardships he would have to encounter was not without foundation.

It had reached his ear that a certain family, whom no one seemed to like much, had manifested no little displeasure because he had never made their house his stopping-place. They had vented their feelings in unkind remarks: "He was too proud"—"Too grand a gentleman to visit poor people"—"Stuck up," etc. Determined to wipe out this reproach before he left Long Run, he turned aside from a little cottage where he had intended to stop, and where, though poverty pressed heavily on the pious inmates, he always received a Christ-

tian welcome. With a thankful heart to Him who had made him his steward, he easily found means, in some way to remunerate such humble friends without wounding their self-respect.

The aspect of his present place of sojourn was far from inviting. Disorder and mismanagement marked the exterior. That he could have borne, but the entire want of comfort, especially in the important item of cleanliness within, was a trial for which his previous experience had poorly prepared him. He had learned that there was not even the excuse of straitened means to cause these defects. They were supposed to have accumulated, by their extreme penuriousness, money enough to live in comfort, and to extend a helping hand to others more really in want.

He was received by the untidy mother with an overacted cordiality, and ushered into a small room with many apologies because it was so crowded. "But the other room smokes," she said, "and husband meant to have the chimney fixed, but somehow he never got time."

With some difficulty he made his way into the room, over chairs upset, household utensils that had been given to the children to play with—to keep them from quarreling—snarling, ill-fed dogs, and various other obstacles too numerous and incongruous to mention. He was cold, but the scanty fire was already appropriated by the children, in a way to remind him of some lines casually met with a few days before.

> "Half a dozen Hoosieroons,
> With mush and milk, tin cups and spoons,
> Bare feet, white heads and dirty faces,
> Seemed much disposed to keep their places."

The mother, however, stirred about lustily, and soon cleared a space for him, sending the grumbling juniors in different directions, replenished the decaying fire, and hastened her cooking operations. A poor down-trodden, half-clothed, black boy took possession of Pilot, and Harry followed to make sure that the wants of his dumb friend were suitably attended to.

After seeing that he was provided with all he required, he reëntered the house, where he found his hostess in high preparation for supper; but alas! the pans and kettles, that had passed through the dirty hands of the children, and been licked by the hungry dogs, were appropriated, unwashed, to culinary purposes. It is needless to say that Harry, though warmly pressed by his officious hosts to partake of divers messes that graced the board, contented himself as well as he could with a few hard crackers, kept from time immemorial for honored guests, with potatoes and eggs cooked in their natural coverings.

He had intended to pursue his journey that evening, but the extra effort to get up a great supper, for "such a fine gentleman as brother Bradford," had made it late, and as the rain was now coming down in torrents, he dared not again risk life and limb over the dangerous roads in such circumstances. Nothing else could be thought of but to stay where he was and make the best of it as a chapter in missionary life.

As soon as he came to this conclusion, he made another visit to the stable to look after Pilot; and how was he astonished to find the poor creature removed from the well-filled crib, and tied to one, empty of everything save dust and cobwebs. He lost no time in taking him back to his original place. The black boy found him thus

engaged, and stammered out some lame excuse; but Harry gave him to understand, that he should make it sure that no such cruelty was again attempted. He had reason to think that the conversation was overheard by his miserly host, and that shame, if nothing else, would secure him from a repetition of such sordid avarice.

Finding nothing congenial in the conversation of such people, he early read and expounded a portion of Scripture that he hoped might benefit them; prayed with them, and then asked to be allowed to retire. His bed, he found, was in the room where he must endure either the smoke or the cold. The choice was offered him. He preferred the latter, and hoped to pass off the remaining hours of his stay in sleep. But it required some debate of the pros and cons, before he could consent to consign himself to such a bed. If he had been favored with the almost universal accommodation of a fire, he would surely have passed the night sitting up before it. But there was no alternative; so, removing only his outer garments, and spreading a clean handkerchief over the pillow, he rebuked the spirit of discontent by the remembrance that while he usually was surrounded by all the blessings of life, his Lord had not on earth where to lay his head. At an early hour he broke away from the urgent invitation of his entertainers to remain for breakfast, and pursued his onward, toilsome way.

The rain of the past night had turned to snow, and the roads were deep with half frozen slush. The cold was increasing, but Harry pushed forward as fast as he could till he reached a comfortable farm-house, where he knew both man and beast would find everything needful prepared for their reception. He preached and took leave of his friends, passing on to another house, where he

spent the night. His object was to divide his time as equally as possible, on this last round among the many claimants for his company. And often did he ask himself, if he could ever become accustomed to these painful partings.

CHAPTER XLI.

RICH IN FAITH.

"Nothing before, nothing behind,
The steps of Faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The Rock beneath."

One afternoon, as Harry was enjoying the society of an excellent family, and had just yielded to their entreaty to remain with them till the next day, a neighbor called in, as he said, "to take a warm," on his way from a village several miles further on in Harry's route. Of course the news was discussed at large. Among other items, he said that Sam Timson was at Hollisburg, drinking and rioting with a set of disorderly fellows, and whether he would be able to get away before morning was at best doubtful.

"And then," he continued, "I know that Sarah is sick, and sent for Peggy last week. If she has not got home, I do not see how old Sister Timson is to get along, left all alone out there. The wind has got round north, and is going to blow a perfect hurricane, and cold as Greenland. I had better be moving towards home before it gets worse."

Harry listened to this account. He remembered meeting Mrs. Timson in class several times, and seeing her at other meetings, and had always been struck with her cheerful piety and strong faith.

"Did you stop at the house, brother?" he inquired "I think you said it was not far from the road."

"Well, I can't say I did; I thought at first I would, but then I concluded Peggy must be at home by this time, so, as I was rather in a hurry, I came on;" and as he spoke, he rose from before the fire of fine blazing hickory logs, wrapped his warm, shaggy dreadnaught coat about him, and started for his own home.

Harry saw him depart in sad surprise. Here was a man, a professed follower of Him who went about doing good; a man who made it a rule to get what he called a "*powerful blessing*," every time there was anything like a revival near him; who prayed long and loud, and failed not on every occasion, literally in season and out of season, zealously to exhort his brethren to a more diligent performance of their duty.

These thoughts passed through Harry's mind, but he only said, turning to his host, "Brother Morse, I must ride on, I find, to-night; I would ask you to go with me if you were well, but it will not be necessary. I must look after this poor old sister on my way; if her daughter has not returned, the consequences might be very serious."

"But, Brother Bradford, I do not like the idea of your leaving the shelter of my roof, at nightfall, in such weather."

"I should like to stay, but it is not very far. I am getting used to facing these mountain breezes; instead of pitying me, young and strong as I am, think of poor old Mother Timson; she must be at least seventy. I could not sleep if I were to stay."

"Well, if you think you must go, I will say no more; and here is wife with a few needful articles, in case your saddlebags will hold them; the house may be bare of even the necessaries of life."

Harry thanked his kind friends, and securing himself as well as he could from the severity of the weather, he set forward. The clouds were, indeed, driving before a furious wind, which, with its violent assaults and icy breath, would have discouraged a less resolute antagonist. The solitary hut was happily but a few miles distant; still it was long after dark when Harry reached its lowly door. The stars, however, shining, as it seemed, with more than wintry splendor, had lighted him unerringly on his way. No flickering candle from the window sent its rays abroad, "like a good deed in a naughty world;" no smoke, that he could perceive, issued from the chimney. He knocked, but received no answer. Again, and he thought a low sound replied. Without longer hesitation he raised the latch and entered. All was dark, but a faint voice issued from the further part of the room:

"Sam, is that you, my son? The Lord be praised that you have come. Now make up the fire as quick as you can, for I am very cold."

"It is not Sam, mother, but another son come to see how you are, and if you want anything this cold night."

"Why deary me! If that aint Brother Bradford's voice, as I am alive! and here isn't a spark of fire for you to warm yourself, and me stiff with the rheumatiz, and can't help myself, let alone you. Well, who'd ha' thought of your coming to see a poor, old woman, the likes o' me, or did you miss your road and get lost."

"I did not get lost. But are you alone here in the dark, without fire this bitter night, mother? How can I make you comfortable? First you must have a fire."

"Dear me, brother, you are just as kind as you can be; but Sam went away and forgot to split the wood. I could not get them great, round logs to burn, no how, so I hobbled into bed to keep warm till he comes. But you'll freeze if you stay here."

"Can you tell me where I can find a light?"

"Oh, you mustn't take no trouble about it. I reckon I can stand it till Sam comes."

"And in the meantime I am going to take care of you. You are very cold now, I am afraid," and he threw his warm, heavy coat over the scanty covering of the bed.

The thankful creature remonstrated; but it was of no avail, and Harry proceeded to find the candle according to her directions. He managed to rake up fire enough among the embers to light it, and immediately administered to her some wine, which had been sent by Mrs. Morse in case of extremity. He then set about exploring the premises to see how a fire could be most speedily secured. Wood enough there was for the occasion, but all too large to burn alone. After a long search, an axe was discovered and though quavering tones of remonstrance reached him from time to time between the vigorous strokes, he soon came back with an ample supply, and when the bright flames went crackling and sparkling up the rude chimney, having by this time become pretty well acquainted with the localities, he produced the kettle, filled it and hung it over the fire. Then from the stores in his saddle-bags he took some tea and other articles of comfort which called forth continual thanksgivings from the now revived and grateful old woman. He inquired how long she had been alone.

"Why, brother, Sam went this morning over to

Hollisburg, to get something for us to eat, and I thought he'd be home afore supper-time, certain. Something must ha' happened."

"Did he leave you anything for dinner?"

"Why; no, ye see we don't make much account of having but two meals in winter; the days is short, you know."

"You must be hungry; take some of this chicken and bread that Sister Morse has sent you, and I will make you some tea."

"Dear me, brother, you aint used to no such work, and now the Lord has sent you (I knew he would send somebody) to make the fire, I can do very well till Sam comes."

"But do you not know that if you had staid here alone till morning without food or fire, you would have perished?"

"Why, no, honey, the Lord always takes care of me, don't he say, bread shall be given, and water shall be sure? I knew he would send somebody, but I little thought of his sending you."

"Then you did not feel afraid of dying here all alone?"

"Dear me, no; what should I feel afraid of? I could pray just as well in this bed, as if I was on my knees before a good fire. He's always taken care of me; and then you know, brother, if it was his will to take a poor old woman, that aint of no manner of use, that would be a blessing. Wouldn't it? And as long as his good time hasn't come yet, here he has sent you to make me this good fire, and this bowl of nice hot tea. Bless you for it, my dear brother, and He will bless you. But I do hate to have you do such things. I reckon you never did the like before."

"Never mind that, mother, I am thankful that I heard you were probably alone here, and was able to get to you."

"Do you know anything about my poor Sam?"

"I heard he was at Hollisburg."

"Oh, yes, poor boy, he's got into dreadful bad ways, and sometimes I feel mighty bad about him. But then agin, I remember how often Peggy and me prays for him. I b'lieve the Lord will bring him to his senses in his own good time. He'd be right good to us, if he'd only keep from drinking."

"When do you expect your daughter home?"

"Well, I some expect her to-morrow. But, oh dear! here you are a setting up all night taking care of me. The Lord will bless you for coming to keep a poor old woman from freezing to death. But he sent you, honey. I saw, as I sort o' peeped out of the coverings, I reckon, four or five men going along the road. One of them stopped and looked over here. I did hope he'd come, but he didn't, and I am glad he didn't now, 'cause I feel so happy that the Lord sent you instead. Would you mind praying with me a bit, and then you can go somewhere and go to bed. We can't be expected to have no bed fit for such a gentleman to lie down in."

Harry prayed with the devout old woman, and then, as he refused to leave her, or to lie down, she told him where to find them, and he brought the bedclothes from her son's bed, and put them over her. After a visit to Pilot in the shed where he had found a shelter for him, he wrapped himself up in his overcoat, and sat down before the fire to meditate upon the lesson taught him by the simple faith and loving trust of his old friend. Long after she was asleep, he still sat thinking of the

blessing of a religion that can and does sustain, when all earthly helps are withdrawn. He then fell asleep in the chair, and waked not till a kind neighbor came to see how the poor woman had fared during the night. Finding that her son and daughter were both absent, she readily promised to see that she was not left alone till they returned. As it was then no longer necessary for Harry to remain, he departed amidst the blessings that overflowed the heart and eyes of the pious old woman.

Few events of interest or importance marked the remainder of Harry's rides this year. Sometimes he lodged in comfortable houses furnished with plain, substantial plenty; sometimes in rude cabins, where his bed was but curtained off from the room of all work, at once the kitchen, parlor, dining-room and bed-chamber for the family. He was often reminded of Mr. Temple's stories of his first circuit in Pennsylvania, when, as he said, he was young and bashful. After he had retired to bed behind the curtain, he was somewhat scared at being addressed by a bright-eyed lass on the other side, calling out: "Brother Temple, is your head high enough? Here is another pillow." And forthwith it came flying over the curtain, whether intentionally aimed he could not tell, but certainly striking him directly in the face.

Children were always Harry's warm and constant friends, even in the most humble abodes, and it was no trifling cordial to his weary mind and body, as he drew near his last stopping-place, to find a group of sturdy, rosy-cheeked urchins, accompanied by the usual retinue of little negroes perched upon a fence, and screaming as soon as he came in sight:

"Uncle Bradford, oh-o! Uncle Bradford, which will you have, gingerbread or taffy?"

Harry laughed, and entering into the hospitable intentions of the little rogues, rode up towards them, to decide the weighty case.

"Well, let me think," he said. "Which would you choose, if you were in my place?"

The laughing eyes glanced from one to another, but none spoke, till a little modest voice ventured to say: "I think taffy is nice."

"So do I," and "So do I," followed quickly along the line.

"Ah, you monkeys! that is because you like the fun of pulling it, and hope to get me into the same scrape! Very well, taffy let it be."

Instantly the sable part of the company scampered across a field to give the necessary orders, while the fairer part capered around Pilot, and finally set off on a general race towards the house. One little one, Joey, finding himself in danger of being left in the rear, began to cry, but was more than consoled by being caught up by "Uncle Bradford," and carried in triumph far in advance of the others to the stile, where he was carefully deposited, and ran joyfully in to spread the news.

It was some time before the others reappeared, heralded by a great scuffling and whispering—each one bringing the little offering of apples, pears, nuts, or whatever they could get to treasure up for "Uncle Bradford."

"Dear me, children, don't be so troublesome," exclaimed their mother, with evident participation in their feelings. "Brother, I hope you will excuse the poor things, they are so glad to see you. I do believe they begin as soon as you go away, to count the days till you can get round again."

Harry thought, as he hugged and kissed the loving little ones by turns, that there was seldom so little to excuse; but the foreboding that they might count a long time before he came among them again, kept him silent. And then came little Joey, with a cup full of parched corn, almost ready to cry because he had nothing better to offer; but the reception it met with, and his share of the caresses, brought again the dimples into his round, rosy cheeks. Altogether, this was one of Harry's saddest partings, and he heartily joined in the universal wish that he might be returned to them, unless he could be placed nearer his mother.

CHAPTER XLII.

DEFEATED PROJECTS.

"My daughter, sir; I pray you note my daughter.
Does she not seem to you most sweetly fair—
A dainty blossom for your hand to pluck?
You may believe me, sir—my word upon't
She is the pearl of perfectness;—and oh,
How pure, disinterested, her love for you!"

Mr. and Mrs. Temple felt pretty secure of being continued in their present field of labor; but the Lannings were making themselves ready for a change. As Harry entered their door, he found Mrs. Lanning, even more untidy in appearance than usual, superintending the destruction of everything like comfort about her house. The taking up of carpets, packing of books, pictures, and in short everything that could be dispensed with, was going on, certainly in a vigorous manner, if not with the care and precision likely to insure their safe conveyance.

After using his utmost powers of argument and persuasion to induce his help-mate to wait till she had some intimation where she was going, Mr. Lanning had retreated to his study, and locked the door, determined to protect his own domains if possible; but recognizing Harry's voice, he came forth to meet him, and the lady took the opportunity to slip in, in order to enlist Harry's coöperation in her plans. The truth was she had deter-

mined to go to conference to her beloved Baltimore, and it was in vain to oppose the torrent of her eloquence.

"Now, Mr. Lanning," she began, "Brother Bradford has come, I know he will agree with me, so I am going to ask him. Brother Bradford, did you not say that you were going to Baltimore next week?"

"Not to Baltimore so soon, I shall spend a week or more at Hunter's Lodge first."

"Oh!" with a blank look at this information; but rallying immediately, she recommenced: "Well, after all, I do not see as that can make so much difference. You see, brother, I have been trying to convince Mr. Lanning that I had better go now and make my visit to Baltimore, when we know that we must move. Mr. Lanning never will say a word about getting a good home. He just takes any out of the way place. He never considers that he has a family to provide for."

By this time her voice had run off into a kind of falsetto, and after the difficulty of finding her handkerchief had been surmounted, during which interval she edified her auditors with some extraordinary grimaces, she applied it to her eyes with an air of resignation to her cruel fate, that she by no means felt.

An involuntary glance gave Harry an idea of the mortification of the much enduring husband, and although he felt the awkwardness of the pause, he could think of nothing to say. Mr. Lanning took up the subject himself, suppressing as far as possible a sigh of mingled sorrow and vexation.

"My dear Melindy, you forget that Brother Bradford is yet ignorant of your plans. Do not distress yourself, you know I have consented to your wish; but you must now consult him." But seeing that the paroxysm was

not yet over, he commenced the explanation. "Mrs. Lanning thinks of going to conference, and as she has not seen her family for some time, she would like to lengthen her visit by going with you, if it would not be inconvenient."

The prospect was certainly not very enticing, but Harry would make any sacrifice, required by this arrangement, to oblige Mr. Lanning, except prolonging his absence from his mother. He therefore answered promptly, that so far as their routes were in the same direction, he would do all in his power to make Mrs. Lanning's journey safe and pleasant.

"But Mr. Lanning does not wish us to go," said a smothered voice from behind the handkerchief.

With the word *us*, light began to break in upon Harry's mind, and it became evident that his vexations in the matrimonial line were not so near a termination as he had hoped. However, he strengthened himself to bear it as well as he could, while Mr. Lanning took the unemployed hand of his fair Niobe, and gravely reiterated his assurance that he should no longer oppose her wish. Finding she could gain no farther concession by her tears, she condescended to wipe her eyes and consider her point gained.

The impediment thus removed, her volubility was resumed, and she gave Harry a programme of her intentions at large—at least such as she deemed it politic to reveal. With singular magnanimity she would relieve her husband of care by packing up herself before she left home, thereby subjecting him and two of her daughters to the annoyance of a dismantled house, or the alternative of seeking the hospitality of their friends. Rosalba and the engaging Albert were to accompany her for

Harry's especial delectation. He tried to submit with as good a grace as possible, comforting himself as did poor Effie Deans, that "the weariest day maun ha' an end."

Half amused, half provoked, he next bent his steps to the parsonage where as usual a scene of sweet domestic peace and refinement tended to soothe whatever of ruffled feeling was left after a walk through the clear bracing air. Near the window sat Mr. Temple, so busily engaged in writing that he did but give a nod of welcome as he entered to Harry, whose attention was drawn to a group in another part of the room by the words, "Try a little longer, Jemmie; sister is sleepy but I shall be ready to take her in a few moments."

Jemmie continued to roll the empty spools for the entertainment of his baby sister, who sat on the carpet at her mother's feet. But it would not do. The voice of the little one became more and more like a cry, as she rubbed her eyes with her chubby little fists. Mrs. Temple was just about to lay aside her work, which she was trying to finish; but Harry stepped forward, and took the baby in his arms. He was aware that in cold weather this apartment was often study as well as reception room, so he only exchanged smiles with Mrs. Temple and walked about, singing in a low drowsy tone, till the blue eyes so wonderingly fixed upon his own, began to droop, and at last sealed themselves in soft slumber. Jemmie had retreated to his own corner and was building a house with blocks; Mrs. Temple, though still plying her needle sedulously, was watching the motions of her new nurse, not a little amused at his adroitness. As soon as she completed her work, she advanced to relieve Harry of his charge, telling him that he was quite an accom-

plished nurse, and had done her a great favor. Touching his lips to the fair cheek of the babe, as he placed it in her arms, he said that he liked the office, and hoped she would call upon him whenever he was at hand. He then turned to the book-case and had just selected a volume when Mr. Temple stopped him.

"You need not take a book, Bradford. I am just done writing, and ready to hear the news. I want to hear the whole story of how you managed to be out in that snow-storm."

They gathered around the fire, and Harry gave them an account of his adventures as well as Arthur Neale's conversion. His auditors listened with hushed attention, and assured him that they thought of him as they heard the wind howl about the walls of their comfortable home and forgot not to pray to Him who holds the winds in his fist, that he would watch over their absent brother, and if he was exposed to its fury, bring him in safety to a comfortable shelter.

After some interesting items of Mr. Temple's rides, and meetings, they inquired when Harry was going to commence his journey homewards. The answer brought up Mrs. Lanning's plans.

"Well done, Bradford!" exclaimed Mr. Temple in great glee. "That is a capital manœuvre on the part of Sister Lanning. You may just consider yourself caught. Propinquity, propinquity! as Lady Clonbrony has it. Poor fellow, surrender at once and make a virtue of necessity."

Harry laughed, but prudently said nothing. At this moment, little Jemmie, judging by his father's uproarious mirth, that the interdict of silence was removed, began to climb on Harry's knee, who turned the subject by

engaging in a good play with the boy, as a reward for his quietness while his father was writing.

As the day approached for Harry to return to Hunter's Lodge, the images of its beloved inmates occupied his thoughts more and more, but could not obliterate the present pain of parting with his friends on Long Run circuit. The Lannings and Temples he knew would often be in Baltimore, and their fields of labor might be near his own. But others, dwellers among these lovely mountain heights and valleys, were many of them fixtures to their own homesteads. They might never meet again, and young as he was in the rough handlings of life, he could scarcely command his swelling heart as he took their hands in parting. He thought they must be the most kind and warm-hearted people in the world, for all alike mourned the separation, as if he had grown up among their own sons and daughters.

His aged hostess at Brookton actually wept as she bestowed her blessing upon him, for she said she knew if he was not sent back the next year, she should never see him again.

"Nobody," she said, as she wiped her eyes, "has ever been to me so much like my dear son Robert as you are, Brother Bradford, and I do believe the children think so too, for there's Annie would rather do anything for you than for herself anytime; and as for John, if he can only get up in your room with you, he's made up. Oh! I do hope they will send you back. I shall keep your room in order. Don't you think they will send you back?"

Harry could only say that it was impossible to tell. But the good lady saw that his heart was full, and was satisfied.

It was a fine starlight morning, keen and frosty, when Harry found himself, with several other dimly-seen passengers, in the stage. He directed the driver to the house of Mr. Lanning, and in a few moments the clanging horn brought that gentleman to the door. His prompt "all ready," was followed by the appearance of the travellers, and Harry could hear the querulous tones of Mrs. Lanning, as she addressed the driver:

"Well, I declare, Peter, I thought you were not coming at all;" and turning to Harry, she finished her speech to him:

"Brother Bradford—oh, good morning. I declare, you never did see such a man as Mr. Lanning. He is always in such a hurry when we are going anywhere. I believe he is glad to get rid of us. I am sure I have not slept half an hour this night, and we have been ready a long time, and waiting."

"Oh, no, Melindy," replied Mr. Lanning, trying to laugh, as he helped her into the stage, "not more than fifteen minutes, and that is better than being too late."

There was time for no more. The last "good bye" was exchanged and they were off.

Mrs. Lanning and her children occupied the back of the coach, and Harry established himself on the middle seat. Thus accommodated, all went on well, for the darkness seemed to silence the ladies, and Albert, after fretting and fidgeting awhile, composed himself to sleep. Harry enjoyed the luxury of thinking his own thoughts for some miles, but when they stopped to change horses, an elderly woman of portly dimensions presented herself, by the light of the advancing dawn, as a candidate for the back seat. She hesitated on the step, but as Mrs.

Lanning made no motion to remove the difficulty, the new arrival undertook her own cause.

"Come, little boy, I reckon you'll sit for'ard among the gentlemen, and give me that place."

"Oh, dear, no," said Mrs. Lanning, holding on to her precious heir, "I should be afraid to have my son sit away from me. Couldn't you sit on one of the other seats?"

"Couldn't, ma'am, no how. It always makes me sick to ride backwards, and that strap ain't nothing to lean against for me. So, little chap, you'll have to move. These 'ere gentlemen look good-natured; they'll take care of you, I warrant."

"If you will commit Albert to my care," said Harry, as he stood ready to unfasten the strap if required, "he will be perfectly comfortable on this seat."

"Well, I suppose I must; but I don't see what right people have to come and crowd others out of their seats," was the ungracious response, as the boy broke from her and scrambled over, rather pleased with the prospect of greater freedom promised by the change.

With some difficulty the portly lady crowded herself into her place, but unfortunately the crowding was not all bestowed upon herself, as the murmurs of discontent from her neighbors plainly indicated. However, there was no remedy, and the rapid motion down a long hill again enforced silence. Harry, meanwhile, found full employment in attending to his mercurial charge, who sometimes amused himself by unfastening the door, at the imminent hazard of plunging headlong into the road. If that was prevented, he would thrust his head out of the window, which he insisted upon letting down, just in time to have his face scratched by the branches of a tree,

or he dropped his cap out, and tried numberless other inventions equally annoying to the passengers.

At the breakfast table he kept up a continual strife with his mother, as to what he might eat, and what he would not eat; for she had adopted the notion that her darling was in delicate health, though it was by no means apparent to others. Harry certainly derived one advantage from the boy's exploits, for his mother's attention was so completely engrossed by him, that she had no time to show off Miss Rosalba. That young lady had used up all her pretty speeches and soft smiles long since with so little effect upon Harry, that she began to fear he was not her congenial soul. Her mother was not so easily discouraged, having in view the fine estate to which he might eventually become heir. She managed, by complaints of being crowded, to induce her not reluctant daughter to try the middle seat. At first Albert boldly resisted the change, but a promise of an extra allowance of candy was too much, and he was gained over.

Still it was of no avail, for Harry had long since sounded the depths, or rather the shallows, of the young lady's mind, and though he was scrupulously polite and attentive to her comfort, there was nothing in common between them to make conversation. So the journey was altogether unproductive of such results as Mrs. Lanning had fondly hoped, and they parted in the afternoon, to meet again in Baltimore.

END OF VOL. I.

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